THE Nation

VOLUME 143 NEW YORK • SATURDAY • DECEMBER 5, 1936 NUMBER 23

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The Shape of Things

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IT HAS BEEN A FIRE-BREATHING WEEK ALL over Europe and the Far East, with Göring shouting threats at Russia, Litvinov hurling defiance back at Germany, Japan and China exchanging insulting civilities over Suiyuan, and even Eden and Blum caught up in the contagion and putting steel into their usually diplomatic language. In every country the Foreign Office has taken on a martial air and the War Department has swollen until it occupies the entire government. Boasts about the size of the air forces sound like stock-market quotations before the 1929 crash, and man-power is measured in astronomical figures. The world is sliding down the runway to war.

*

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT IS DOING HIS BEST TO peddle peace in this war-beset world. At the height of his triumph and prestige, Mr. Roosevelt has been given a popular reception at Buenos Aires that recalls the pathetic eagerness with which the European peasants and workers acclaimed President Wilson after the Armistice. We trust that the sequel in this case will not be equally unhappy. We go to press several hours before Mr. Roosevelt's speech. The President has a chance to call for a consultative pact, by which the United States and the Latin American countries would get together on their attitude toward a threatened war in the Americas or Europe. He has a chance to get common agreement on neutrality pacts by which war credits would not be extended to European nations at war and war materials would be embargoed. Since the Americas contain much of the oil, tin, copper, and manganese that the war-makers will need, and the meat, wheat, and coffee on which their populations will have to exist, they are in a strategic position to check the war madness in Europe. What makes us rather skeptical is the fact that the American countries have their full share of the tendencies toward fascist barbarism which are sending Europe to destruction. In the short run, however, the pan-American conference may do something to postpone the conflict or temper it when it comes.

*

THE WAR MAP OF SPAIN CHANGES EVEN AS the correspondents put their dispatches on the wires. Towns move from rebel to loyal hands; the lines of the front waver. The headlines of the past week tell a staccato story of the slow improvement in the government's position. From November 27 to December 1 the heads in the

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New York *Times*, somewhat abbreviated, have run as follows: Rebels Attack Foes on Madrid Flank; Insurgents Appear to Realize Capital Must Be Taken Street by Street if at All. New Army Driving on Rear of Rebels; Reinforced Spanish Leftists Claim Two Villages Taken Southwest of Toledo. Loyalists Aim at Oviedo; Rebel Losses Declared Huge as Miners Drive on Northern City; Defeat of Foe in South Announced, but Rightists Clear Talavera Region. Drive on Capital of Rebels Made by Leftists; Loyalists Extend Gains; Reported 45 Miles from Burgos; New Advance Made Near Oviedo; Other Successes Noted. New Battle Outside Madrid; Rebel Thrust Checked. Meanwhile, to the embarrassment and annoyance of Great Britain and France, the Spanish government has demanded that the Council of the League of Nations meet "to examine the situation" created by the recognition of Franco by Germany and Italy and by their armed intervention. There is no denying that this demand forces an issue that the powers—fascist and otherwise—have sought to avoid. They will probably still manage to do so. But the so-called democratic states will not exorcise the acts or the intentions of the fascist bloc merely by averting their eyes.

*

IT IS NO ACCIDENT THAT THE AMERICAN Federation of Labor convention in Tampa pinned up a record of reaction that will stand for some time. The effective progressive forces had been suspended for insisting on organizing the unorganized, and though the delegates from state federations and federal and national unions put up an honorable fight, they were hopelessly outnumbered. The convention indorsed legislation for a thirty-hour week but shelved proposals in favor of a constitutional amendment; it rejected proposals for the formation of a labor party; it refused to allow a duly accredited representative of the Spanish trade-union movement to address the delegates; it refused to consider boycotting Hearst, but voted to boycott a union label. With respect to intra-federation questions, it did everything possible to antagonize the rank and file. It continued the C. I. O. suspensions, outlawed the East Coast seamen's strike, and moved to set up a maritime department designed to be a rival to Bridges's Maritime Federation. It moved to restrict the freedom of federal unions, state federations, and central labor unions. These bodies are sensitive to rank-and-file sentiment and therefore tend to be "radical." Apparently the "radicalism" of the Seattle Central Labor Council in backing the strike on the *P. I.* was the immediate cause of the proposal to restrict freedom of resolution in local labor bodies. Another reason is that they tend to be sympathetic to the C. I. O. In general the A. F. of L. at Tampa gave the impression of crawling into a hole and pulling the hole in after it.

*

DEVELOPMENTS IN LABOR PARTY POLITICS IN this country are none too reassuring. The decision of the Socialist executive committee to join a national farmer-labor party was an excellent first step. But the approaches made by the Socialist Party of New York to the American Labor Party of the same state have unfortunately been repulsed. The press reports that the executive committee of the American Labor Party has decided not to admit Socialists or Communists either as parties or as individuals except on condition of the dissolution of their parties. If that decision is maintained it may spell disaster for the whole American labor-political movement. Party organizations built up through years of effort cannot be expected to scrap themselves overnight. The executive committee of the American Labor Party will soon have to make definite decisions as to the party structure and organization. Since what happens in New York may have a formative influence upon the labor-political movement in the rest of the country, the committee is faced with a heavy responsibility. It must discharge that responsibility without rancor to former opponents and with a clear eye for building a broad labor-party base throughout the country. This is a problem of immense difficulty and will be discussed more fully in an editorial in next week's *Nation*. Meanwhile we must say that if the trade unions show themselves incapable of statesmanship, they will not only have missed a chance at political power but will have signed their own death warrants as trade unions.

*

THE NATION HAS BEEN MANEUVERED INTO A position somewhat like that of the Light Brigade. Cannon to left of us, of short range but great explosive capacity, have trained a barrage on our recent editorial on the methods used in the Moscow trial. This editorial, detonates the *New Masses*, proved that *The Nation* is either plain dumb or a tool of the Trotskyites, "an organ of a band of counter-revolutionary conspirators and assassins." The volleys and thunders on the right—showering grape-shot over our editorial on Joseph Shaplen's reporting of the C. I. O.–A. F. of L. fight in the New York *Times*—emanate from the *New Leader*, organ of the Socialist Old Guard. Not only were we unfair to Mr. Shaplen, according to the *New Leader*, but our editorial was scarcely distinguishable from those appearing in the Communist *Daily Worker*, which wants a split in the labor movement. Either the *New Masses* or the *New Leader* must be wrong about us; we can't possibly be Trotskyite assassins, enemies of the Soviet Union, and Communists all at once. The cross-fire from left and right, however, fails to daunt or confuse us. We shall proceed as usual through the Valley of Death, firm in the knowledge that although our adversaries cannot both be right, both can be—and are—wrong.

*

CHINA IS THE BEST NEWS OF THE WEEK. After four years of turning aside wrath with soft answers, it has suddenly turned and stood its ground. The capture of Pailingmiao, headquarters of Prince Teh, the Japanese-supported ruler of Inner Mongolia, is its first victory since the Nineteenth Route Army's heroic stand at Shanghai in 1932. The invasion of Suiyuan province by Mongolian and Manchoukuoan troops acting as a stalking horse for the Kwantung army was a further step in the march of

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Japanese expansion. Already in control of eastern Chahar, the Japanese hoped to push westward until their power extended over all of Inner Mongolia. Thus a Japanese wedge would have separated China from Outer Mongolia, that is to say from Soviet Russia, since Outer Mongolia is a Soviet province in all but name. Rudely shocked out of its complacent arrogance by the loss of Pailingmiao, Japan, which had denied that it was concerned in the Suiyuan fighting, threatened to throw the full force of the Kwantung army against the Suiynanese. In another burst of bravery, China answered that it would permit no interference nor suffer the loss of another inch of territory and even hinted that it might itself take the offensive and push the invaders back into eastern Chahar. Two factors make the Mongolian situation crucial. Chiang Kai-shek has a more unified China behind him, and is master of more arms, territory, and public confidence than at any other time since he came to power. On the other hand, Japan cannot retreat from its policy of expansion. Suiyuan is the focus of issues greater than the fate of Inner Mongolia.

*

SAINT AND STATESMAN, RESPECTIVELY, ARE the recipients of the Nobel peace prizes for 1935 and 1936. Carl Von Ossietzky, convalescing with unbroken spirit from the rigors of a Nazi concentration camp and a Nazi prison, announced that he hoped in his speech of acceptance to testify anew to his pacifist faith. Carlos Saavedra Lamas, Foreign Minister of Argentina, who won the peace prize for 1936, is a quite different figure from the frail, indomitable German. For a number of years Señor Lamas has been active in the unification of the South American countries against war and has sought to establish on a firm basis the friendship of these countries with the United States. He was the author and instigator of the anti-war pact signed by thirteen American nations including the United States, as well as of the inter-American non-aggression pact of 1933; he organized mediation by six neutral nations in the Chaco war. As presiding officer this year of the Assembly of the League of Nations, Señor Lamas made an unsuccessful attempt to strengthen and reform the League's machinery for peace. Encouraged by the Nobel prize, Señor Lamas may be expected to continue his work of fortifying peace in the Americas.

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THE SECOND OF THE AMAZING VAN Sweringen brothers died on November 23, before he had a chance to rebuild the family fortunes. A legend has been built around the Van Sweringens. They were the classic artists of the holding-company device; starting with about two million dollars they pyramided it into a vast railroad empire with assets of three billion. The picture of their holdings will be found crisscrossing the pages of many a treatise on the new arts of corporation finance. In a functional society their ingenuity and single-purposed drive might have been turned to better uses than to win and lose (on paper) a railroad empire. It is symbolic that Oris P. Van Sweringen should have died in harness—he was riding in his own private car on his own railroad; and even more that he should have died in the thick of a Congressional investigation—just as Senator Wheeler's committee was to penetrate the labyrinth of his business structure. The Van Sweringen properties, the key to which lay in the options to purchase the common stock of the Mid-America Corporation, which holds the railroad securities, are now left without any personal tie. And since it was the determination of the brothers that held their roads together, the Van Sweringen railroads are no longer likely to figure as a unit in the four-system consolidation plans that have been proposed for the Eastern territory. Thus ends the short-lived Van Sweringen dynasty—from shoestring to shoestring in a generation.

*

PEONAGE IN ARKANSAS RECEIVED A SEVERE legal blow on November 25 when Paul D. Peacher, town marshal of Earle, Arkansas, was sentenced in a federal court to two years in prison and a fine of $3,500 for violating the anti-slavery statute. Peacher was accused and convicted of falsely arresting a group of Negroes on charges of vagrancy, merely because they were "loafing" on the street at the time, and forcing them to work out their sentences on his farm. Peacher's attorney, Mr. Lamb, said in summing up that the charges against his client were the result of politics. "There had to be an investigation," he said, "with the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union sending messages to the President and to Governor Futrell and the election coming on." Mr. Lamb also said, complainingly, that he had thought "when the election was over, this lawsuit would be allowed to die out." The S. T. F. U. will no doubt gladly acknowledge its part in the affair, but there are at least two indications that the investigation *was* an election demonstration. Mr. Peacher was spared the prison sentence and released on bond; the commission appointed by Governor Futrell in the heat of the campaign, when he promised an investigation of farm tenancy right after the election, announced a date for its first session and then canceled the meeting. Attorney General Cummings made sure that the Peacher trial was competently and fairly handled by sending a special representative to the scene. This blow at backwoods dictatorship is to be followed by further attempts to enforce the Bill of Rights by the Workers' Defense League, if it can raise the necessary funds.

*

AS THE DAWN WAS BREAKING ONE MORNING in Albany last May a lone and energetic gentleman was scurrying between Senate and Assembly rousing the gently snoring legislators to awake and save the country. It was Senator McNaboe gathering votes for an appropriation to investigate "communistic and subversive activities in schools and colleges." In the closing minutes of the session the Senator got his appropriation of $15,000 (cut from $150,000), and he got his committee of three Democrats and three Republicans all set to hold their collective finger in the hole and save the dike from the roaring waters of communism. Public hearings in the inquiry were scheduled for late in October, but on the very morning

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they were to have opened, an indefinite postponement was announced. Now Senator McNaboe says he will dispense with them altogether and open cold at Albany with his report to the legislature on February 15. In the meantime he is conducting a one-sided public hearing by slinging charges at all the nearest targets, as in his fulminations against Cornell University, the Civil Liberties Union, and the Teachers' Union. No doubt taxpayers need some comic relief, but $15,000 is a lot of money to spend just to allow a Senator to make a spectacle of himself.

*

SIR BASIL ZAHAROFF DIED IN MONTE CARLO on November 27. Newspaper obituary notices remind us that he was a man of mystery; that he was born a poor boy; that he had more power than a king. Actually the "mystery" was a convenient cloak, purchasable only by a man of great wealth, for the unscrupulous manipulation of men and governments. Sir Basil's power resided largely in his money, which he left behind him. If he had virtues, we do not know them. His deeds are writ in gunpowder; they have made their little flash and their transient detonation. For a while we shall probably hear the echo, in romantic novels, in the histories of our era. In time even the echo will die away.

*

FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE WEEK *THE Nation* appears without a Madrid dispatch from Louis Fischer. In that time no message of any sort has come from Mr. Fischer; and it is probable that he is no longer in Madrid. We earnestly hope that before another issue goes to press we shall have heard from him. Meanwhile we are making every effort, through the Spanish Ministry of War, to find out our correspondent's whereabouts and assure ourselves and our readers of his safety.

Bigness and the Chain Stores

REPRESENTATIVE WRIGHT PATMAN'S article in last week's *Nation,* defending his anti-price-discrimination measure, raised a set of issues that cut deeply at the basic structure of our industrial life. Many business men have regarded the Patman Act as the modern embodiment of the Antichrist, because it interferes with their setting their own prices. But the act must be seen historically not as an isolated measure—whether devil or angel—but as part of the third phase of the American handling of the problem of bigness in business. The first phase, after the supine laissez faire experience of the nineteenth century, was the Sherman anti-trust legislation of 1890, with its attendant trust-busting. The second was the Federal Trade Commission legislation of 1914, intermittently enforced and aiming chiefly at publicity of accounts and the maintenance of ethical business standards. The third phase began with the NRA legislation of 1933, and established the principle of the self-regulation of industry, the maintenance of price levels within it, and its internal conformity to some established principle of uniformity and discipline. The dissolution of the NRA left this third phase incomplete and left those sections of industry which had relied upon the NRA stranded and anxious for something to replace it. They saw the Patman Act and grasped for it eagerly.

How did it happen to be so handy? The fact was that the inadequacy of the existing Federal Trade Commission and anti-trust machinery for combating price discrimination had for some time been recognized. What made it the more glaring was the enormous growth of chain stores and mail-order houses. This had been going on through the entire decade of the 1920's, and was accentuated after 1929 when the depression made every saved penny loom more important than ever. The chains were obviously crowding the independent merchants out of business—in groceries, meats, dry goods, clothing, variety goods, drugs, confectionery, tobacco, shoes, and furniture—in short, over the entire range of the daily staples of life. And with every step in the growth of the power of the chains, the protest against them grew in volume and intensity. Hostility in the local communities soon was translated into hostile legislation in the state capitals. The most obvious device was the discriminatory tax, exempting the single store and steeply graduated with the size of the chain or the volume of sales. But here the legislatures were reckoning without the Supreme Court, which invalidated the tax measures. Nothing was left but direct regulatory action by Congress.

It was the last Hoover Congress that called for an investigation of chain-store activities by the Federal Trade Commission. The investigation took three years and cost the government a very considerable sum. It produced thirty-three factual reports on every phase of chain-store costs, wages, profits, prices, operation, and financial structure, along with a final report containing the commission's conclusions. While carefully done, cautiously phrased, and hemmed around with qualifications, these reports bolstered on the whole the case against the chain stores. They brought considerable evidence to indicate that the price spread between the chains and the independents was a broad one, that its sources lay in lower costs extracted from manufacturers, lower wages, and unethical and discriminatory practices, as well as in operation economies. On the basis of such a report it was not difficult to get Congressional action. The facts were there; the sentiment from the constituencies was there; a powerful lobby was there in the form of retail merchants' associations, wholesale grocers' and druggists' associations, and trade associations of all sorts; finally, a leader was there—Representative Wright Patman of Texas—with energy and tenacity, equipped with a Bryanesque populist doctrine of unusual persuasiveness, and a veteran of the lobby technique through his successful championing of the veterans' bonus. The combination of fact, sentiment, lobby, and leader was irresistible; the collapse of the NRA made the moment a strategic one; and the Robinson-Patman Act was the result.

With such a history it was inevitable that the act should have stirred up great antagonisms, and should in the end

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be ambiguous. In its form it supplants and supplements various sections of the Clayton Act of 1914. In its procedure it works through the Federal Trade Commission and grants that body greater powers than it has thus far exercised. In its intent it aims at chain stores and mail-order houses. In its structure it is cast in such general terms that it affects cooperatives as well, and may even limit severely the day-to-day activities of business. Its general consequence is clear. By prohibiting price discriminations, rebates, and unwarranted discounts it introduces a price rigidity into an economic structure that has on the whole had a good deal of price flexibility. It throws a lifeline to the wholesalers and other middlemen, who were on the way to becoming as extinct a race as the Indians or the bison, and might like them have ended up secure only when embossed on our coins. But above all, it gives the independent storekeeper another chance at survival in a universe that had become increasingly hostile to him.

These results will prove palatable or otherwise depending on one's economic interests and the resulting economic philosophy one has. Our own concern is chiefly on three scores: the interests of the consumer, the interests of the worker, and the revolt against bigness in business. That the chain stores sold at lower prices than the independents is admitted by both sides. Where the quarrel lies is in the explanation of this price margin. The chains claim that it arises from cutting down middlemen costs and from large-scale buying and operating economies. The independents claim that it arises, first, from the whip hand that the chains have over the manufacturers, forcing them to cut their wage payments and profit margins, and, second, from underpaying and sweating their own labor. If action had to be taken, the statistical analyses in the Federal Trade Commission reports were probably as good as any to base that action on. But a critical examination of those figures does not always leave us with clear-cut conclusions, and the later census figures often blur those conclusions further. The consumer will undoubtedly have to pay for the Patman Act in the form of higher prices. Whether he will get all or part of that differential back in higher wages and greater community prosperity is problematic. Ultimately the justification of the Patman Act will have to be found in broad social rather than in specifically economic terms.

This raises the final question of bigness in business. The nineteenth century believed in free competition, unhindered and unaided by government. That faith has vanished before the onslaught of the giant corporation and the machine process. The whole set-up of industry is now hostile to competition: we have to legislate it into existence, and the Patman Act is part of that legislative effort. Here is the paradox that strikes at the heart of our whole system of a controlled capitalism. We depend on the profit motive to organize industry, but we set bounds to it by extra-pecuniary considerations which are of course foreign to business men's minds. We personalize the hostile forces in what is probably the most impersonal economic structure the world has ever seen, and instead of fighting the profit system we fight the chain store, the public-utility magnate, the investment banker, who have learned all too well the lessons of the profit system. There is the school of thought, led by Justice Brandeis (see his vigorous dissent in the Liggett chain-store tax case), which feels that bigness in business under capitalism is developing a lop-sided human race, specialized only to take in money, and that even in such terms it has outgrown our capacities to control it. For the men at the top, it calls for more capacities than they can muster; for the men at the bottom, it provides them with no chance to use the capacities they may have. With this view we tend to agree. But a close examination of the Patman attempt to break up the big chain structures leads us to feel that the remedy does not really reach the disease. The road to control would seem to lie not in seeking to enforce competition but in socializing industry.

The Fascist Front

WITH the report that Italy and Japan have reached an agreement recognizing each other's conquests, the final steps in consolidating a four-power fascist united front have now been taken. In the past fortnight the fascist international program has developed with bewildering rapidity. Before the world could grasp the full implications of the Ciano-Hitler agreement over Austria, the two great fascist powers announced their open support of the Spanish rebels. Scarcely a week later Ambassador von Ribbentrop signed an "anti-Communist" pact with Japan which is generally believed to involve a secret military alliance directed against the Soviet Union. The Italian-Japanese accord closes the last gap in the fascist front.

While these official announcements have only confirmed agreements long known to exist, they are bound to have far-reaching effects. The fascist powers have thrown away the last pretense of legality; they stand brazenly defiant of all the laws and conventions which have hitherto been acknowledged by civilized nations. There can be neither moral nor legal justification for the recognition of the Spanish insurgents. The rebels had risen against a government which had just received an overwhelming popular mandate at the polls. The fascist powers had not even the pretext of recognizing a successful *de facto* regime. But fascists need no justifications; they merely act. Similarly, the Italian-Japanese agreement is a clear defiance of the League of Nations, of which Italy is still a member. In recognizing the illegal seizures of Manchuria and Ethiopia it declares that force is superior to law.

As long as these alliances were secret and the glorification of force camouflaged by a sham legality, the democratic states could find pretexts for refusing to face reality. This is no longer possible. The fascist powers have come out flatly against law and have sanctioned aggression. No country desiring peace can ignore the challenge. Even groups which have been unbending in their hatred of communism have begun to recognize that fascism is the greatest immediate threat to world peace. The apparent unanimity with which this conclusion has been reached by responsible conservatives in both Great Britain and the United States is at least partly accounted for by the bad

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timing of the German-Japanese anti-Communist pact. While mildly skeptical, the Anglo-Saxon world has been impressed by the new Soviet constitution. Its bill of rights and its provision for a bi-cameral legislature and direct election of high officials are essential elements in democratic procedure as it is understood in this country and England. Nor can it be said that the new constitution is merely a political gesture calculated to win the sympathy of the democratic countries in the Soviets' hour of peril. Not only has it actually been in the process of drafting for many months; it is the logical outcome of economic and social forces that have been at work for years. Fundamentally, as Stalin pointed out, the new constitution is a recognition of the disappearance of the class antagonisms which have overshadowed Russian life for decades.

Other evidences of bad timing and bad strategy may be found in the fact that the fascist powers offer their new threat to British and French interests just when those countries were seeking to close their eyes to the Nazi menace and accommodate themselves to the *faits accomplis* in Europe. That even the Germans recognize their blunder is evidenced by the fact that their press has broken out in a rash of reassurances to Britain that the German-Japanese pact is a harmless affair. But this has not prevented Britain and France from strengthening their military ties and adopting a more aggressive tone. As for America, the entrance of Japan into the scheme of fascist power must make a vast difference in our foreign policy. However Russia may be feared by the capitalist powers in Europe, it is Japan and not Russia that is feared here, both by our military groups and by certain sections of our population. Germany could not have chosen a more effective way of alienating whatever American sympathy may have existed for its plans.

If the announcement of the new fascist international does not bring the world closer to war, it will be because the dictators have overreached themselves. The solid phalanx of fascist powers is dangerous only as long as it is directed against one or two powers. The fascist dream of empire does not involve a crusade against all benighted countries simultaneously. Both the Tanaka Memorial and Hitler's "Mein Kampf" envisage a gradual program in which the desired regions are picked off one at a time. The new alliances make such tactics increasingly difficult. France, surrounded on three sides, is likely to strengthen rather than abandon its agreement with the Soviet Union. Great Britain has the choice of surrendering all influence in Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Far East or of strengthening its ties with the anti-fascist powers. Even the United States, because of the growing Japanese threat in the Far East, is drawn closer to Great Britain and the Soviet Union. Alliances breed counter-alliances, and the necessity for mutual defense can reconcile, temporarily at least, even the deepest antagonisms.

Although there are disquieting reports from the Soviet-Manchurian border, the first real test of the fascists' new policy will probably come in Spain. Since the rebels have virtually no navy, it is evident that the threatened rebel blockade of Barcelona will be carried out, if at all, by Italian and German vessels, assisted by fascist airplanes. Such intervention would be a gross infringement of the League Covenant as well as a violation of the Pact of Paris. Inaction in face of such provocation would not only doom the League but seriously impair French, British, and Soviet interests in the Mediterranean. No one can predict with any certainty what would happen in case such a blockade were actually imposed. If irritation could lead to a determined effort to resurrect the League, there might still be hope of establishing a mechanism for keeping the fascist powers in check. But if, as is more likely, it leads only to an intensification of the armament race, we may expect war within a comparatively short period.

Battling for the TVA

WHILE the government and the private interests wrangle and bicker over the vexed problems of power distribution in the Tennessee Valley, the consumers themselves have suddenly emerged as an organized factor in the situation—one that may produce startling results for both sides. A conference of municipalities, called by the Chattanooga Electric Power Board and attended by delegates from some 160 towns and cities in five states, is at this moment meeting in Chattanooga to consider the power problem as it affects the electricity consumers of the Valley, and to form a permanent organization to represent their interests in the future.

The idea of the conference grew out of the power-pool negotiations at the White House in September. The results of that meeting were regarded with skepticism by most of the public-power leaders in the Valley, particularly the decision to extend for three months the "hands-off" agreement between the TVA and the Commonwealth and Southern. That decision hit Chattanooga especially hard. Early in September, just before the White House conference, the TVA and the City of Chattanooga seemed to be on the verge of concluding a power contract after six months of negotiation. The city had, in fact, signed the contract, and the document had been returned to Knoxville for the signature of A. E. Morgan, chairman of the Authority. But he delayed signing, without giving any adequate reason. Then the news of the power-pool proposal broke. The local power board went to Knoxville and agreed, after talking with Dr. Morgan and David E. Lilienthal, power director of the TVA, to wait until early in February for a contract. But they were far from happy about the situation. Although convinced that Lilienthal was in sympathy with them and opposed to the truce with the C. and S., they felt that Morgan was hostile. At a meeting with Lilienthal held immediately after the Knoxville conference the idea of a meeting of municipalities was born.

Whatever may be the effect of the present conference on the TVA, one thing is certain: the public-power leaders in the Valley are backing Lilienthal in his differences with Morgan and will fight any power-pool plan that would sacrifice the TVA rate schedule or suppress municipal distribution systems.

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WASHINGTON WEEKLY

BY PAUL W. WARD

Our Ambassador to Moscow

Washington, November 29

ONCE upon a time there was a Great Man and he was elected President of the United States. His name was Franklin D. Roosevelt, and high among the reasons that many were sure he was a Great Man was belief in him as not only a determined but also an effective peacemaker who would keep this nation out of war and, of necessity, do the same for the rest of the world. It was hard to see why they so regarded him. There was nothing in his public utterances that had not also been said at one time or another by Small Men who had occupied the White House without gaining the people's trust, and he had permitted his chief aides in the military and naval branches of the government frequently to rattle their spurs and sabers in public without reprimand or contradiction.

Nevertheless, the popular belief in his zeal and ability so increased during the first three and a half years he occupied the White House that when he recently sailed for the Buenos Aires conference he carried with him not only the hopes but also the expectations of many liberals and radicals that at the conference he would somehow produce a formula to avert the cataclysm impending in a world plainly headed toward a new barbarism. These hopes and expectations were not dimmed by the character of the delegation he sent ahead of him to Buenos Aires, a delegation including Sumner Welles, a man with a boundless lust but with little talent for Latin American intrigue who, as Assistant Secretary of State, has been largely responsible for this government's manhandling of the Cuban political situation. These hopes and expectations—surviving the fact that the Chaco dispute cannot even be mentioned in the agenda and that, though the conference must deal with forces that are world wide, Europe, Asia, Africa, and even a part of the Americas, Canada, have been excluded—refuse, it seems, even to be dimmed by the appointment of Joseph Edward Davies as Ambassador to the U. S. S. R., an event announced just after Roosevelt sailed.

The connection between the Davies appointment and Roosevelt's impending performance at Buenos Aires may seem a little obscure at first, but the link is easily revealed. The Buenos Aires conference is important only in relation to the peace of the world, and the peace of the world at the moment all too plainly hangs upon the fate of Soviet Russia and the plans of its enemies—German, Japanese, Italian, French, British, and Polish—to destroy it. It is already apparent that the ruling classes of those European nations which thus far have escaped militant fascism and retain some vestiges of democracy prefer even the German or Italian brand of fascism to communism, and to save their own skins will join Hitler and Mussolini, if necessary, in an assault upon the U. S. S. R. It is not their souls, their intelligence, or their consciences that betray these men but their vested interests and their prejudices. In such a situation it is vitally important, if the United States is to play a potent role as peacemaker and peacekeeper, that this government have at Moscow as ambassador a man profoundly conversant with the complex forces now bearing remorselessly upon that point and, above all, a man of true impartiality. Instead, Roosevelt has chosen in Davies a blood brother to the Edens, Baldwins, and Lavals of this world. One might even add Blum to that list, for Davies, though never a Socialist, was at least a La Follette supporter in his youth, and during the Wilson Administration played a role not unlike that of the Landises, Richbergs, and Tugwells in the Roosevelt Administration. Davies is so far from having a profound knowledge of or interest in the Russian situation that there is strong reason to doubt that he wanted the Moscow post. For nearly a year gossip over Washington tea tables has hummed with tales of how Davies, at the behest of his immensely wealthy wife, was angling for an ambassadorship at some gayer capital—Paris, in particular. To be sure, it was gossip, but in such matters gossip has a strange veracity; Washington's society editors scooped the pants off the State Department correspondents in reporting the various steps in Davies's progression toward Moscow, and for at least part of the time their tea-table sources proved more accurate than those the Assistant Secretaries of State were able to tap either at the White House or in their own department.

It was more than a year ago that the society reporters first picked up the story that Davies, a wealthy lawyer-lobbyist, was seeking an ambassadorship. At the same time they picked up the story that he was going to marry Mrs. Marjorie Post Close Hutton, heiress of the $20,000,000 cornflake and Postum fortune, who was then in Reno divorcing her second husband, E. F. Hutton, a Liberty Leaguer and uncle to Barbara Hutton, the Woolworth princess; that Davies was simultaneously engaged in letting his wife, Emlen Knight Davies, get a Nevada divorce from him; and that his daughter, Mrs. Thomas P. Cheeseborough, Jr., was in Reno getting a divorce in order to marry Senator Tydings, of Maryland. The three divorces and the subsequent marriages came off as scheduled by the gossips, who also, according to the society reporters, listed Davies's impending ambassadorship as a sort of dowry his bride-to-be required. When Davies gave an elaborate dinner for Laboulaye, the French ambassador, the fact was seized upon as evidence that it was the Paris post he sought, and this assumption gained in strength when State Department attachés let it be known that the

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dinner had been so interpreted by Cordell Hull and that the Secretary of State had been exceedingly annoyed by it. When at a later stage the society reporters scrambled into their offices crying, "He's got it! He's got it!"—meaning that Davies had cinched an ambassadorship—State Department attachés pooh-poohed the report and recalled Hull's anger over the Laboulaye dinner. That was months ago, and Hull's aides were still belittling the reports up to six weeks before Davies's appointment was announced. In the interim, however, at least one Assistant Secretary of State had lost his early confidence that Davies would never achieve an ambassadorship; what changed his mind, as he said, was that "at Palm Beach they already are calling her [the new Mrs. Davies] 'the ambassadress.'" Now the talk around the tea tables is that Roosevelt expects that Moscow will prove too restricted a field for Mrs. Davies's lavish tastes in entertaining and that the new ambassador, therefore, will give up the post within a year.

Exactly what attitude Davies takes toward the European situation in general and Russia in particular cannot be determined, for the responsibilities of his new office keep his lips sealed. However, since all the important factors in that attitude are bound to have been shaped by his financial interests and past associations, what it is may be deduced from such things as the character of the group that turned out as his intimate friends to witness his oath-taking in Hull's office. The group included, in addition to Mrs. Davies and two ropes of pearls, Dan Roper, Pat Harrison, Jesse Jones, Tydings, Joe Tumulty, Merle Thorpe, mouthpiece of the Hoover era's overlords, and Harry Covington, a rich product of the Alien Property Custodian's office. Davies's attitude may also be deduced from his description of himself as "a corporation lawyer of liberal outlook" and from the fact that, in addition to being one of the representatives here of the A. T. and T., he also has been among the legal brains behind the creation of the National Dairy Products Corporation. There is something significant, too, in the fact that he has been American counsel and fiscal adviser to Trujillo, the Dominican despot, and that, though he is unquestionably one of the most successful lawyers practicing in Washington, his activities in that respect have gone almost unnoticed through the years and he is known not as a good lawyer but as a clever one. His field marshal is Alfons B. Landa, a son-in-law of one of Washington's most famous big-time lobbyists, Frank Mondel, and one of his favorite golfing companions at the Burning Tree Club is the President's secretary, Marvin McIntyre, bosom pal of nearly all lobbyists. It also is not without meaning that he appears to have clinched his new job by raising $100,000 offhand for the Roosevelt campaign at a time when Roosevelt and his aides were none too certain of victory; that he let himself be married to Mrs. Hutton in the seventy-room apartment on East Ninety-second Street in New York given her by her second husband; and that the "Angel of Hell's Kitchen"—as he would like to have his wife known for her philanthropies—bedecked the apartment for the occasion with 5,000 chrysanthemums that had been dyed blush pink at a cost of $2,000 to match the icing on the 300-pound wedding cake which the establishment's twenty-five servants, assisted by three caterers, served the fifty wedding guests. From this it would seem that the liberalism of the American embassy at Moscow henceforth will be describable only in French—not left but *gauche*.

Sitdown

BY LOUIS ADAMIC

IN THE last ten years or so much has been written, here and abroad, about the rapid "robotization" of labor in mass-production industries. Various alleged students of the worker "on the belt" have concluded that he was rapidly ceasing to be a normal human being. He was helpless, docile, machine-like. But this was an exaggeration. All the manhood is not stamped and squeezed out of the industrial worker—certainly not out of the rubber worker in Akron.

The rubber worker in Akron may be a so-called hillbilly from West Virginia, or a mountaineer from Tennessee or North Carolina, or a husky Negro from Georgia or Alabama, or a Pole, a Croatian, a Lithuanian, an Italian, a Hungarian, or a native Ohio or Pennsylvania farm boy, or a young man born right in Akron, with a high-school education. During the boom years, 1910 to 1929, when his productivity increased 300 per cent, he made, besides millions and millions of automobile tires and mountains of other rubber goods, 120 millionaires.

With the 1929 crash thousands of native rubber workers left Akron for the hills of West Virginia and the states further south; some of the foreign-born returned to their old countries or moved elsewhere in the United States; other thousands went into the queues in front of private-relief offices. But tens of thousands stayed. Those who retained their jobs lived in fear of losing them. When the New Deal came along, the accumulated discontent found a healthy expression in unionization, which was obstructed and inhibited by the A. F. of L. fakers in every way possible. During the NRA period, however, a militant and intelligent rank-and-file movement developed which ultimately overcame the A. F. of L. "organizers," forced them out of Akron, and took over the United Rubber Workers of America, now one of the healthiest unions in the country and an important member of the Committee for Industrial Organization.

The rank-and-file movement really got under way in a curious and peculiarly American way. The story goes that

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one Sunday afternoon a couple of baseball teams composed of workers employed in two big rubber factories suddenly refused to play a scheduled game because they found out that the umpire—to whom some of them objected, incidentally, also as a person and an umpire—was not a union man. The players just *sat down* literally, some on the grass, others on the benches beneath the grandstand, while the crowd, consisting mainly of workingmen—partly "for the hell of it" and partly in seriousness—yelled for an umpire who was a union member, cheered the NIRA, and generally raised a merry din, till the non-union umpire withdrew and a union man called the game. It is said that the expression "sitdown" was first used in the discussions that followed that game.

Not long afterward a petty dispute over a point in working conditions developed between the workers and the superintendent of a department in one of the great rubber factories. The superintendent would not yield and, annoyed, made an indiscreet remark which angered the workers in question; about a dozen in all. They had been on the verge of dropping their demand or complaint, whatever it was; now, remembering the sitdown at the ball game, one of them blurted out, "Aw, to hell with 'im, let's sit down!" And they sat down.

In a few minutes several other departments of the extremely complex and delicately organized production process in the factory, which employed 7,000 men, were in a mess. What had happened? The question was asked all over the plant. The answer quickly spread through the place: There was a sitdown in such-and-such a department! A sitdown? Yeah, a sitdown; don't you know what a sitdown is, you dope? Like what happened at the ball game the other Sunday!

Hundreds of workers who did not know what the sitdown was about but who belonged more or less to the rank-and-file element experienced a thrill. A sitdown in the plant! In no time the most important departments of the factory were at a standstill. Thousands of workers sat down. Some because they wanted to, more because everything stopped anyhow.

And sitting by their machines, caldrons, boilers, and work benches, they talked. Some realized for the first time how important they were in the process of rubber production. Twelve men had practically stopped the works! Almost any dozen or score of them could do it! In some departments six could do it! The active rank-and-filers, scattered through the various sections of the plant, took the initiative in saying, "We've got to stick with 'em!" And they stuck with them, union and non-union men alike. Most of them were non-union. Some probably were vaguely afraid not to stick. Some were bewildered. Others amused. There was much laughter through the works. Oh boy, oh boy! Just like at the ball game, no kiddin'. There the crowd had stuck with the players and they got an umpire who was a member of a labor union. Here everybody stuck with the twelve guys who first sat down, and the factory management was beside itself. Superintendents, foremen, and straw bosses were dashing about. They looked funny, these corporals, sergeants, and shavetails of industry. Telephones were ringing all over the plant. This sudden suspension of production was costing the company many dollars every minute. . . . In less than an hour the dispute which had led to the sitdown was settled—full victory for the men!

Walking out of the factory gates that evening, the men laughed. They told the night shift about it. The thing got into the Akron newspapers. There was no little talk about the affair, most of it perhaps, to the effect that the sitdown was a good joke on the factory management. The rank-and-file leaders, some of whom were more or less leftist, others mainly inspired by the New Deal and its Section 7-a, did their best to keep the talk going. They reiterated that, as had been demonstrated by the sitdown on the baseball diamond and the sitdown in the factory, workers could get somewhere only collectively, by sticking and working together. The thing to do was to join the unions. Many did join and new federal unions were organized.

Some of the leftist rank-and-filers realized that the sitdown might have revolutionary implications or possibilities—workers stopping production, sitting down, and taking possession of plants! So many of them, free-lance agitators without authority from any union, what the bosses called "trouble-makers," began to encourage sitdowns. Working in various departments in the several Akron rubber plants, they subtly organized sitdowns when disputes arose. As a result of late there have been scores of sitdowns, some lasting only an hour or even less, others several hours or most of the day, running into the next shift; and a few stretching over two, three, four, or more days, thus becoming "stay-ins."

Some sitdowns tied up production only in parts of a given factory, others paralyzed the whole plant. When the sitdowns became longer, the men sitting in their working places took to whiling away the time by playing cards or checkers, telling yarns, singing, or reading. Some of them simply stretched on the benches or on the floor and went to sleep. When a sitdown ran into the next shift, the incoming workers relieved the old shift and did the same thing —sat, talked, sang, played cards or checkers, and slept on the floor—till the dispute that had produced the sitdown was settled; or else they gave their dinner pails to the sitters-down and went home—which made the sitdown a stay-in.

Of course, like the original sitdown, several sitdowns—perhaps a majority of them—in the Akron rubber plants have occurred without encouragement from any rank-and-file organizer. They have been sudden, spontaneous affairs, springing out of immediate conditions in a department.

Nearly all the sitdowns have been effective, winning the demands of the men who started them. So far as I know, only one or two have fizzled out. The men in other departments almost invariably back the initiators of the sitdown. Why? Let me give a list of the virtues and advantages of the sitdown as a method of labor aggression from the point of view not so much of the rank-and-file organizer or radical agitator as of the average workingman in a mass-production industry like rubber.

1. The sitdown is the reverse of sabotage, to which many workers are opposed. It destroys nothing. Before shutting down a department in a rubber plant, for instance, the men

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take the compounded rubber from the mills, or they finish building or curving the tires then being built or curved, so that nothing is needlessly ruined. Taking the same precautions during the sitdown as they do during production, the men do not smoke in departments where benzine is used. There is no drinking. This discipline—of which more in a moment—is instinctive.

2. To say, as did a New York *Times* reporter, writing from Akron last winter, that the sitdown "resembles the old Oriental practice of passive resistance" is a bit far-fetched, but it probably is a sort of development of the old I. W. W. "folded-arm" strike and of "striking on the job"; only it is better, manlier than the latter, which required men to pretend they were working, and to accomplish as little as possible without being discharged, which was more fatiguing than to work according to one's capacity, as well as contrary to the natural inclinations of the best class of workers.

3. The sitdown is the reverse of the ordinary strike. When a sitdown is called, a man does not walk out; he stays in, implying that he is willing to work if——

4. Workers' wives generally object to regular strikes, which often are long, sometimes violent and dangerous, and as likely as not end in sell-outs and defeat. Sitdowns are quick, short, and free of violence. There are no strike-breakers in the majority of instances; the factory management does not dare to get tough and try to drive the sitting men out and replace them with other workers, for such violence would turn the public against the employers and the police, and might result in damage to costly machinery. In a sitdown there are no picket-lines outside the factories, where police and company gunmen have great advantage when a fight starts. The sitdown action occurs wholly inside the plant, where the workers, who know every detail of the interior, have obvious advantages. The sitters-down organize their own "police squads," arming them—in rubber—with crowbars normally used to pry open molds in which tires are curved. These worker cops patrol the belt, watch for possible scabs, and stand guard near the doors. In a few instances where city police and gunmen have entered a factory, they were bewildered, frightened, and driven out by the "sitting" workers with no difficulty whatever.

5. Most workers distrust—if not consciously, then unconsciously—union officials and strike leaders and committees, even when they themselves have elected them. The beauty of the sitdown or the stay-in is that there are no leaders or officials to distrust. There can be no sell-out. Such standard procedure as strike sanction is hopelessly obsolete when workers drop their tools, stop their machines, and sit down beside them. The initiative, conduct, and control of the sitdown come directly from the men involved.

6. The fact that the sitdown gives the worker in mass-production industries a vital sense of importance cannot be overemphasized. Two sitdowns which completely tied up plants employing close to 10,000 men were started by half a dozen men each. Imagine the feeling of power those men experienced! And the thousands of workers who sat down in their support shared that feeling in varying degrees, depending on their individual power of imagination. One husky gum-miner said to me, "Now we don't feel like taking the sass of any snot-nose college-boy foreman." Another man said, "Now we know our labor is more important than the money of the stockholders, than the gambling in Wall Street, than the doings of the managers and foremen." The sitdown technique is still in the process of development, but already one man's grievance, if the majority of his fellow-workers in his department agree that it is a just grievance, can tie up the whole plant. He becomes a strike leader; the other members of the working force in his department become members of the strike committee. *They* assume full responsibility in the matter: form their own patrols, keep the machines from being pointlessly destroyed, and meet with the management and dictate their terms. *They* turn their individual self-control and restraint into group self-discipline—which probably is the best aspect of the sitdown. *They* settle the dispute, not some outsider.

7. Work in most of the departments of a rubber factory or any other kind of mass-production factory is drudgery of the worst sort—mechanical and uncreative, insistent and requiring no imagination; and any interruption is welcomed by workers, even if only subconsciously. The conscious part of their mind may worry about the loss of pay; their subconscious, however, doesn't care a whit about that. The sitdown is dramatic, thrilling.

8. All these factors were important in the early sitdowns. They still are important. In addition now there is in Akron the three-year-old tradition that when a sitdown begins anywhere along the line of production everybody else is to sit down, too. And while we are explaining the men's solidarity in sitdowns, we mustn't forget also that the average worker in a mass-production plant is full of grievances and complaints, some of them hardly realized, and he knows or feels instinctively that when he and his fellow-workers get ready to act, they will need the support of all the labor in the place, and they will get it only if they back the men who have initiated the current sitdown.

9. The sitdown is a purely democratic action, as democracy is understood in America within the capitalist system.

10. The sitdown is a social affair. Sitting workers talk. They get acquainted. And they like that. In a regular strike it is impossible to bring together under one roof more than one or two thousand people, and these only for a meeting, where they do not talk with one another but listen to speakers. A rubber sitdown holds under the same roof up to ten or twelve thousand idle men, free to talk among themselves, man to man. "Why, my God, man," one Goodyear gum-miner told me, "during the sitdowns last spring I found out that the guy who works next to me is the same as I am, even if I was born in West Virginia and he is from Poland. His problems are the same. Why shouldn't we stick?"

[*This is the first of two articles on the sitdown. The second, dealing with the current importance and the probable future of sitdown strikes, will appear in the next issue. A letter by Mr. Adamic pertaining to these articles is printed on page 687.*]

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Fascist Terror in Majorca

BY A REFUGEE

[*The article which appears below was written by a German, formerly resident in the Spanish island of Majorca and now living in Switzerland. Although it describes the events of the first weeks of the Spanish revolution, it is interesting as one of the few news stories that have come out of the island.*]

THE rebellion on the island started on the night of July 18. Although the Socialists had, of course, heard radio accounts of General Franco's rebellion and had been advised by a few of the older men to expect trouble at home, they were quite unprepared to defend themselves. Incredibly enough, they made no attempt to conceal party documents or to disguise party activities, much less to prepare for armed resistance. On July 19, therefore, the rebels were able to enter party headquarters without a serious struggle. There was some shooting, particularly in the early morning hours, but the Socialists were so hopelessly outnumbered that their abortive attempt at counter-revolution was quickly checked. Marques de Zayas, leader of the fascists—the so-called National Syndicalist Party of the young Spanish Workers—had been in prison with many of his followers at the fortress of San Carlos after an attack on Socialist headquarters a few weeks before. De Zayas was at once released. Later on San Carlos was used as a place of execution for the "reds." The People's House became the headquarters of the Blue Shirts; the newly established women's section was stationed at the Izquierda Republicana, the house of Azaña's party. At once a Balilla group was formed and small boys with loaded revolvers were seen everywhere. As the lists of members of the Socialist Party had been taken by the fascists, it was a simple matter to clean out the enemy. In the small towns and villages no lists were needed; everybody's political opinion was known to his neighbors. Many hundreds of men were thrown into prison and concentration camps; other hundreds were shot out of hand. Some escaped into the mountains, where they hid for a while, but later they were forced to give themselves up or commit suicide. The fascist searching parties were relentless; supported by the Guardia Civile they watched every pass and port. Fishing boats were not permitted to put out, and motor boats patrolled the island.

A railroad tunnel leads from the port of Palma under the town and up to the railway station at Soller. A number of fleeing workers had hidden in the tunnel. At the risk of their lives relatives brought food to the tunnel's entrance, and the men inside devised a little cart to draw it up by. The hiding place was discovered. The Blue Shirts manned an engine with young men armed with rifles and pistols, and sent it along the tunnel. Those inside who were not killed by bullets were crushed beneath the wheels.

The story of Manuel, the son of my washerwoman, is typical. Manuel was the leader of a small Communist cell in the little village near Palma where I lived. He was known as an industrious, thoughtful man and an idealist. At the beginning of the revolution he fled to the mountains. For weeks the fascists searched for him; for weeks his family was threatened with death if they did not reveal his hiding-place. But they remained silent. In the middle of August the fascists ordered five of Manuel's best friends to bring him in dead or alive. The friends joined Manuel to tell him the bad news and prepared their own escape. But Manuel sent them home again; he wanted to think about the whole matter and assured them that he would give them a sign. He did, the next morning. His body was found shortly after dawn by a friend of mine, a Swedish aviator, hanging from a fig tree. He had not wanted his friends to be sacrificed for him. The body was brought to Palma and buried, although his family was not permitted to know where. The women did not dare to wear mourning, except his mother, who wore black earrings. There was no express prohibition against mourning, but it was thought to be dangerous. General Queipo de Llano declared black garments for mourning to be a sin against the Holy Ghost and inharmonious with the white lily of the Virgin Mary, for whose glorification this holy war was being fought.

The prisons were soon filled to overflowing, and various fortresses and even ships docked in the port were used as concentration camps. At first the fascists guarded the prisoners, but they killed so many with bullets and castor oil that the military governor was forced to order a guard of soldiers. Families learned of the death of relatives only by accident. It was forbidden on pain of death to listen to broadcasts from the government station or from any foreign station. A small radio station founded by Captain Homar, a member of an old aristocratic family and a thorough fascist, had the exclusive right to broadcast. I met the captain in the winter of 1932, and I was surprised to see that even then the fascist salute was used by him and his associates. In the summer of 1933 Homar told me that Majorca must have its own radio station, since he was convinced that it was only a matter of time before General Franco would seize power.

In spite of the prohibition, people persisted in listening to the forbidden stations. Dozens of times I have listened in at the home of an Andalusian workman. Sometimes there would be more than a dozen persons gathered around the radio, which was under the roof in an old barn. The room was lined with blankets, and we all sweltered under a heavy rug. In Palma alone there were seven clandestine broadcasting stations, in direct communication with the Ministry of War in Madrid or with Barcelona. Six of

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these broadcasters were discovered and shot within a week. The seventh had not been found when we left the island. Every motor, cart, or other vehicle was searched, for it was suspected that the secret station was on the move.

The Majorcans on the rebel side were constantly stiffened by the promise of German and Italian help. Juan March, the famous Majorcan millionaire, owner of the Banca March, announced he would buy German airplanes and present them to his country. The population was heavily taxed for foreign planes, and since payment had to be in gold, gold articles were exchanged for dubious paper. Every day the papers published lists of donors, with the amount of gold or jewels they had given. The gifts were all holy. The lists read like this: For the immaculately conceived Mother of God and for the continuation of the war—a gold chain; for the Holy Friend of Children and our courageous Blue Shirts—a gold ring; for the Holy Trinity and the downfall of the heathen—and so on. There were always numerous items about the heathen. One day the island newspapers published the news that a shipload of Turks had landed at Formentor, threatening Christians with their curved swords. This opened the purses and the gold poured out.

The first plane bought with this gold flew over Palma in the middle of August, greeted with frenzied shouts by the people. The fascists cried "Arriba España!"; the monarchists cried "Viva España"; and a few of the happier ones saluted the German plane with "Heil Hitler!" Unfortunately two of the first three planes were damaged in an air attack a day or so after they appeared.

From the day of the first delivery of arms, the German and Italian sailors were the pets of the island. They were showered with flowers and presents, and were to be seen everywhere walking arm in arm with Spaniards. The Italian and German colonies relished this appreciation of the "great fascist world powers." Strangely enough, the flag of the Reich was seldom seen. I saw the swastika only three times. Almost everybody in Palma displayed the Italian flag.

On August 16 Captain Bayo, coming from Barcelona, disembarked the first troops of the anti-fascist militia at the small harbor of Porto Cristo on Majorca. The vanguard had landed the night before and the contingent was welcomed with real joy by the people. Sardanas and boleros were danced in the streets and everybody was in good humor. When the news of the "invasion of pirates" reached Palma several hours later, the people were not told that the "pirates" were 6,000 government troops with all necessary accoutrements of war. The inhabitants, therefore, joined with the troops to repulse the attackers, who were described as a few hundred criminals, mostly black-bearded Russians with Marxist literature under their shirts. Although the loyalist troops did not reach Palma the first day, a fight took place at San Severa, a nearby town, and so many rebels were killed that the Palma newspapers were forbiden to mention San Severa. Instead they assured their readers that every last red had been driven from the island—this at a time when the loyalist troops were intrenched in a line fourteen kilometers long between Porto Christo and Arta. For days the dead lay thick on the battlefields, until the soldiers burned the bodies.

For three weeks the government forces remained on the island. They had brought and stored food and ammunition for 25,000 men. They had their own newspapers, radio station, mail service in daily communication with Barcelona and Madrid, tanks, ambulances, cranes, and so on. Acting on orders from Madrid, they withdrew from the island without the loss of a single man or any material, as eyewitnesses from among the rebels later testified. The retreat was covered by planes and nineteen small cruisers. It was said that Azaña wanted to avoid further Italian intervention in Majorca. But the Italian commander, Conte de Rossi, claimed full credit for having cleaned the anti-fascists out of the island, and he was feted for it in Palma and other towns, and received the blessings of the clergy.

The fascists told me proudly that there were also Germans among them, and they invited me several times to inspect the "wonderful organization" of their Blue House. I politely declined. The German consul indignantly denied that any German citizens had taken part in the "liquidation" of the Socialists. Whether they had or not, the terror went on. Socialists who had escaped arrest told me that in one district in Palma 500 had been killed; in trucks and touring cars, twenty and thirty chained together, they had been driven outside the town and shot at a convenient spot. Another man estimated the number of executions during the first six weeks in Palma at 1,500. The clothing of the victims was heaped up in the churchyards, where the people were allowed to sort out for themselves evidence of the death of relatives or friends.

In the church of a little village near Manacor, fascists destroyed the treasures of the church, which "unfortunately" had been undamaged by the reds. They threw them all in a heap, fetched a dozen workmen out of prison, grouped them around the "robbery," took a photograph of the scene, and killed the workers as soon as the picture was taken. The photograph was published as an example of red terror. This story was told me by the priest himself, who deplored it.

When I left the island at the beginning of October, the underground terror had so affected the people that even followers of the right were afraid. A denunciation from any source meant almost certain death. Persons I knew among the workers, the Catholic bourgeoisie, and the aristocracy told me they longed for the establishment of a military dictatorship which would disarm the extremists of both sides and stop the war. There was no one, of whatever party, who did not envy me the chance of leaving the island. No Spaniard was permitted to leave. Foreigners were offered huge sums to smuggle Spaniards aboard foreign battleships.

This prohibition was especially cruel to persons who had come to Majorca for the summer holiday. They knew nothing of their relatives on the Spanish mainland and could not communicate with them. I was given more than fifty letters to mail when I left and on the cruiser I met a Swiss lady who carried a suitcase full of mail. Fortunately there was no censor at the port the morning we left.

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George Peek at Home and Abroad

BY ALVIN JOHNSON

BEFORE the World War George N. Peek was a live, aggressive manufacturer of agricultural implements, a thorn in the flesh of Alexander Legge of the International Harvester. Bernard Baruch, with his uncanny instinct for key men, summoned both Peek and Legge to Washington just when their concerns were in a position to make mountains of money. They came regretfully, rather resentfully, somewhat suspicious of each other; but Baruch was implacable. They signed up for the duration of the war at a dollar a year (which they never got). Promptly they became fast friends, among the tireless hawks engaged in chasing profiteers into their holes.

As a farm-machinery man Peek knew that agriculture was desperately sick. He had been a prominent figure in an Administration that had implored the farmers to break every available acre, buy expensive machinery, overwork the land and themselves, sink deep over their heads in debt, because "food would win the war." When the war was over, the farmer was left prostrate under sacks of wheat and bales of cotton, kegs of butter and lard, fat hams and sides of beef. And so in season and out of season Peek agitated for justice to the farmer. Industry had saved its prices by combinations, open or tacit. Peek was for farmers' combinations. Industry had been safely sheltered behind the tariff. The farmers had been humbugged with tariffs that were inoperative, since farming was an unorganized export industry. Like every great American industrialist Peek knew that there is a way for even export industries to enjoy the benefits of a high tariff. Have a two-price system: high prices at home, low prices abroad.

When the McNary-Haugen scheme was evolved for dumping farm supplies at what they would fetch and working the tariff for what it was worth in domestic consumption, Peek saw a ray of real hope for the farmer. There were defects in the original plan; Peek helped to mend them. He wasted his time and substance running around the country converting politicians, industrial notables, and great merchants who wouldn't have known a lister from a tedder if they had met them face to face. Peek thought that Roosevelt was a convert to the cause. Indeed, at Kansas City Roosevelt made a declaration that seemed to look toward the McNary-Haugen plan. To Peek Roosevelt seemed like bright spring after the moldy winter of Hoover. He foresaw another dollar-a-year episode, bucking the depression as he had helped buck the war—a second generous and patriotic youth, more golden than the first.

Roosevelt was inaugurated, and Peek, as he had hoped, was invited to Washington. But this time there was no skilful and patient poker player like Bernard Baruch to stand between a forthright man like Peek and an idealistic Chief Executive. Instead, he found himself shut up in a kind of hopper with Wallace, Tugwell, Jerome Frank, and Hull, to mill themselves under their own steam. Here his bruises and his book* begin.

There were two conflicting plans for bringing about the relief that farming absolutely needed. One was Peek's plan of a two-price system, selling abroad at the world price and at home at that price plus the tariff duty. The other was what proved to be Wallace's plan of cutting production in many items to the needs of the domestic market, and in the case of cotton and tobacco, cutting production sufficiently to correct the world price. Both plans involved serious complications. In the first plan, the farmers whose products were dumped abroad had somehow to be put on the same footing as farmers who sold at the favorable domestic price. In the second plan the farmers who cut their production had somehow to be compensated. Since the American government is seldom honest enough to give a subsidy frankly, out of ordinary revenues, both plans included a processing tax, which really had nothing to recommend it over the majority of our more pernicious taxes. It looks preposterous now, but at the outset both parties supposed that they were pulling the same way. For a time there was frightful bewilderment: both teams were pulling to burst their girths and not moving an inch—something very characteristic of Washington.

Finally the whiffle-trees snapped and Peek found himself all snarled up in confusion. As his book shows, he hasn't got the straps and ropes untwisted yet, or the welts and chafings healed. George Peek simply could not work with the Tugwell-Wallace-Howe crowd. It was with the greatest relief that he found himself transferred to a job that was especially to his taste: finding foreign markets for farm surpluses. He interpreted his commission liberally, to cover not only all the foreign trade but also all other foreign transactions of the United States. A nation in its foreign economic relations, he assumed, is a unit, like a business in the circle of competitors and customers. It needs first of all a system of accounts, clearly showing income and outgo, and Peek set out to establish such a system—something we badly need. But every system of accounts must make assumptions. Peek's assumptions seemed to him axioms. If the United States buys goods, that is outgo; if it buys gold, that is also outgo. If it sells securities, that is on the income side temporarily, but ultimately on the debit side. Foreigners menace us when they hold our securities, unload their own securities on us, deposit their money in our banks. Foreigners are striking at our prosperity and independence when they sell us anything we can make ourselves—even at high cost. If with one day's American labor we buy the product of one

*"Why Quit Our Own." By George N. Peek with Samuel Crowther. D. Van Nostrand Company.

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day's foreign labor, we deprive an American laborer of a job. If with one day's labor we buy the product of two days of foreign labor, we are depriving two Americans of jobs. Logically, one might remark, the same principle should hold when it is one day's labor against ten. We ought to be raising our raw silk in the Carolinas. But then only Henry Ford and Rockefeller could afford to strut around in silks, and Japan would have nothing with which to pay for our cotton. Not to press the point, Peek is not up to himself when he plunges into general theory.

He negotiated a number of deals on a barter basis, one with Germany, for example, in which we were to exchange 800,000 bales of cotton for 25 per cent cash and the rest in goods which would not have competed with our own production. The deal fell through because in the meantime Secretary Hull had committed himself to a trade reciprocity policy that Peek considers damnable.

We may disregard the theoretical extravagances in which Peek, like many another level-headed practical man, lets himself get mired. His proposed farm and tariff solutions are not to be lightly dismissed. No matter how clearly one sees the injury to agriculture wrought by overproduction, one cannot feel complacent about the "plow-up and kill" which the Wallace party put through. Certainly the possibility of a two-price system, as a temporary expedient, should have been more thoroughly explored. We should all have preferred to see the surplus corn, wheat, meat, cotton disposed of at cut prices to the impoverished masses of Europe and Asia, rather than destroyed. The expedient could, however, have worked only temporarily. The American public would not long be content to subsidize our farmers for the sake of providing foreign populations with food and fiber below cost of production. But it is not unthinkable that we might have a two-price system at home that would develop the consuming power of the poorer strata. A multiple price system is ancient practice in the supply of electrical power. It is beside the point that this system works in favor of the stronger, not the weaker, consumers. We have long had a multiple price system for medical services in favor of the poor, and most of us are hoping to see it extended in favor of the lower-middle-class incomes. In New York we have a two-price system for milk. The farmer is paid one price for milk sold for direct consumption, another price for milk for manufacture. We could carry the multiple price system farther and make a very low price, say, for families with incomes under $1,200. The British are doing something of the kind. We are doing something of the sort when we subsidize housing for low-income groups. We could do the same thing with bread, meat, fruits, and vegetables. If the plan of multiple prices were carried through, we should see an amazing development of our domestic purchasing power.

To be sure, the system would be cumbersome and subject to many abuses. But the one-price system is compatible with social welfare and economic health only when income is distributed with substantial equality. Taking the world as it is, the one-price system leaves the producer with crushing surpluses on his hands and the consumer in bitter want of the very goods composing those surpluses. It is a matter for great regret that Peek was not permitted to carry through his experiment in the two-price system, even though the beneficiaries would have been foreign populations. It would have set us thinking about our own population.

Peek's plan for the control of foreign trade and other transactions involving foreign exchange looked to him so logical and so obviously beneficial that only some hidden and injurious principle like "internationalism" could explain the coolness of Hull and Sayre. Peek wanted to put the whole business of foreign economic relations under official control. Let nothing happen in this field except with explicit authorization. Let the government negotiate with foreign governments as to volume and kind of imports and exports, international investments, the payment of debts owing to Americans, tourist traffic, remittances from immigrants to relatives. There is bureaucracy for you, and from a man who is always inveighing against bureaucracy. He calls his plan an American plan, in contrast to Hull's "international" plan. What could be more international than a plan involving continuous negotiations between governments on the whole complex of economic relations? And as for the origin of the plan, it was first developed systematically by Soviet Russia, then taken up by Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Austria, Hungary, and Poland, and gradually forced upon the more democratic countries of Europe.

Peek is particularly enraged by Hull's reciprocity arrangements. Why do we stick to the antiquated, unconditional most-favored-nation principle? We give concessions to Belgium on cement in return for concessions on Belgium's part supposed to be equivalent. Then we generalize the concessions, and other countries that have given us nothing enjoy the same rate as Belgium. Well, who is gypped, ourselves or Belgium? If all the world enjoys the reduced duty, it will mean precious little to Belgium.

We do give a special concession to Cuba on sugar, which Peek himself calculates as equivalent to a cash subsidy to Cuba of $32,000,000. If we generalized this concession to all sugar-producing countries, it would be worth little or nothing to Cuba. Peek seems not to note the meaning of the special concession, in spite of his clear picture of the Cuban situation. Let the goods of a particular country in at half the duty, and we are presenting to that country a bounty equal to half the duty. Let all countries enjoy the same concession and our price drops halfway toward the world price. No country gets any special benefit, though all may gain through the greater volume of trade.

There may be a reason why we should present Cuba with $32,000,000. There might be a reason for presenting a few million dollars to Belgium through special trade concessions, if we could get special concessions that yielded us net as much or more. Some very shrewd bargaining would be required, and an old-fashioned American like Hull would rather not try it. He prefers to let the individual American business man make his own bargains, under impersonal government regulations. Peek, Stalin, and Hitler are confident of their superiority to the individual business man in making international bargains. I wish Peek had been able to put his barter transactions through. We should all have learned something.

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

ALL honor to the government of Norway and the Nobel Prize Committee! That government deserves the highest credit for refusing to bring any pressure to bear upon the committee; its representatives resigned so that Hitler could not charge an official governmental action, and the committee then decided in favor of Carl von Ossietzky for the 1935 peace prize without taking counsel of anybody's fears. Curiously enough, it never even asked the advice of Adolf Hitler. That was, of course, a great oversight, as was evidenced by the snarls of anguish from Berlin. It is unheard of, an official Nazi spokesman says, to give the Nobel peace prize to a man who was convicted as a traitor by the highest court in the land even before the Nazis came to power. So the Hitler government has officially protested to the Norwegian government that this is an unprecedented insult; the official statement adds that serious consequences—to be defined later—will follow. That, too, is characteristic of men in office who happen also to be bullies and braggarts. "We aren't going to tell you what we are going to do to you, but, by heck, it is going to be serious, so you look out for yourself."

Now aside from my great joy that justice has been done to Ossietzky and that this recognition of an outrageously ill-treated man has appeared in every newspaper in the world, I get the greatest satisfaction from the stupid and fumbling way in which the Nazi government has received the news. If it had said "ouch" a thousand times it could not have made clearer the deep hurt it sustained. The manner in which it has acknowledged the award confirms me in considerable degree in my belief that sooner or later the stupid, one-sided mentalities in charge of the German people are going to make a blunder as bad as that of Hindenburg and Ludendorff in insisting on the unlimited submarine warfare and thus drawing the United States into the struggle, or the Zimmermann note advising Mexico that it should fight us to take back New Mexico and Arizona. It is obvious again that one of the numerous qualities Hitler lacks is a sense of humor.

Certainly the German government has shown great stupidity in not ignoring the whole thing or laughing it off. It should have jested about the prize itself, about how happy the German government would be to receive the money intended for Ossietzky since no state prisoners could receive financial support from abroad. It should have said it had several other candidates if the Nobel committee couldn't find anybody else to give its prize to another year. But no, it had to be dead serious about it; its sacred honor was impugned; it was a slap at the whole German people, a reflection upon the sacred Nazi government. I am certain that it will yet be proved that it is an insult to the whole Aryan race, and if by this time Nazi agents are not at work to prove the Jewish ancestry of every member of the Nobel Prize Committee I shall be astonished. It might have been prepared for the announcement—at least to the considering of its policy in advance—as most other people were since its foreshadowing in the press. But it just could not conceive that any committee could hold it in sufficient contempt not to inquire what its feelings in the matter would be. Hence the cries of pain and the effort to besmirch Von Ossietzky.

Von Ossietzky cannot be besmirched in the eyes of anyone who knows the facts about his trial and punishment under Chancellor Brüning—as the latter is reported to be in this country hiding under an assumed name I hope these words will come to his attention. That action of the Brüning government was a disgrace to it; it set the seal upon the treachery and duplicity not of Von Ossietzky but of the government which persecuted him. What was Von Ossietzky's offense? Simply the publication in his honest and truthful weekly, the *Weltbühne,* that Germany was violating the Treaty of Versailles and secretly arming. One article brought out the fact that German fliers were being trained on the flying fields of that very Soviet government against which Hitler is now forming a new Holy Alliance! In other words, Von Ossietzky had a sufficiently honorable character to refuse to share in the deceitfulness of his government, its pretense that it was living up to the Policy of Acceptance. Nothing could illustrate more clearly the fundamental ethical lack in the character of the German people which keeps them suspect of all the world. They have for generations held up to their school children as model patriots the men who similarly tricked Napoleon by evading his limitation of their armaments. It is not merely that in their eyes the end justifies the means, but they hold that your true patriot is the man who lies and cheats on behalf of his government. They cannot see what a stain this leaves upon their honor and how it has made people believe that their solemn word is worth no more than a dicer's oath.

The Nazi spokesman went farther. He warned the world that demonstrations of approval of the Nobel award might mean serious consequences for the prisoner. Of course he was too stupid to see that this again brings into the clearest light the high-mindedness, the generous point of view, and the general nobility of the German government. I got to know Carl von Ossietzky quite well when I was in Berlin in the winter of 1930-31. I believe he would be the last to ask for any soft-pedaling upon the world-wide rejoicing that the stamp of disapproval has been put upon his government by the Nobel committee. An "unfriendly act"? Yes, Mr. Nazi Spokesman, an unfriendly act and by the righteous moral opinion of the world!

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BROUN'S PAGE

Newspaper Guild Thanksgiving

IT IS quite true that the American Newspaper Guild was not a major issue in the last political campaign. Perhaps it was not even a minor issue, and yet the result has had very favorable consequences for the union of working newspaper men and women. I hasten to add that none of these advantages would have accrued but for the increasing efficiency of guild organization.

Within the guild and outside, it is frequently said that many mistakes were made in the early days of the union. That is undoubtedly true, but fortunately none of them seems to have been fatal. On at least half a dozen occasions *Editor and Publisher* asserted that some policy or other was the death warrant of the guild. And yet it would be hard for anyone to deny that at the present moment the guild is better off than ever before in its history.

The first and all-important reason for progress has been and still is economic necessity. Nobody could possibly have induced reporters to depart from an ancient tradition and join a union if it had not been for the harsh conditions in the craft. I am not saying that every single man or woman in a city room was put upon or exploited. There were good bosses and bad bosses. Some bosses are always better than others. There was a good deal of romantic benevolence. Certain specialists were paid salaries out of all proportion to their work. These were few in number and I know them all. With one in particular I am intimately acquainted.

A familiar form of attack against the guild was the assertion that it was a one-man movement. Indeed, the enemies of the guild did not even dignify it as a "movement." It was rather the whim or the hobby of some fat exhibitionist who loved to get arrested in order to see his name in the paper. Nothing could be farther from the true facts. In the beginning—and now and eternally I hope—the guild was a mass movement. It began with a little group in Cleveland and spread to New York. For a time its growth was almost wholly spontaneous. No one among the early settlers had any experience in leadership or very much capacity for it. Still less was the baby union equipped with men skilled in the handling of that hard and grinding detail which is necessary for organization.

But the members educated one another. The American Newspaper Guild became a sort of combination of Quaker meeting and labor college. We sat around and spoke, each one as the spirit moved him or her. Fortunately the women were not segregated. The spirit which moved discussion was the spirit of the times in which we lived. Frequently it was said that reporters could never succeed in unionization because their training and their calling were of such a highly individual nature. But in the long run newspaper experience helped.

Even among guild members the charge has been made that the budding union tried to cover too much territory. I hope the day never comes when it covers too little. A case in point was a resolution for the freeing of Tom Mooney which was passed at the first regular convention in St. Paul. This was an easy handle for enemies to seize upon. It was said that the guild had gone mad and was attempting to dictate editorial policies to the publishers. To be sure the publishers were peculiarly thin-skinned when reporters first began to organize. I still hear that the guild made a tragic error when the then president of the New York chapter addressed a group of editors in Washington and began, "To whom it may concern." I trust that by now the publishers of America know it does concern them.

As one of the early leaders of the guild I saw my job to be that of a kind of ballyhoo man and advance agent. We are now advertised by our loving enemies, and the most important part of the guild's development has come within the last year. I refer of course to the work of organization, and here I should like to put on the record the name of a man familiar to all guildsmen but less known to outsiders. Jonathan Eddy is the person who has born the great brunt of giving form and substance to the early aspirations of the union. And there should be mention at this moment of Morgan Hull, who sat up with the Seattle strike and brought it to a successful conclusion. As an incurable romantic I must mention one man whose name I have forgotten. In those days we had a sentimental notion that a single person was sufficient to start a chapter. We had not developed far enough to avoid the making of martyrs. My assignment was to talk to a group of fifty-five men on the New York *Sun*. I began with insufficient background. It was my impression that they had come over to join. It developed that they had merely assembled to tell me that their boss was the finest man in the world and they wanted nothing to do with any union. Exasperated, I pointed an accusing finger at a man I knew and said, "Frankie, you're telling me that your working conditions are so perfect that there is nothing you desire. Is that so?"

"Yes," he said.

"Well then, your attitude is that your own working conditions are wholly satisfactory and that you don't want so much as to lift a little finger to help any newspaper man or woman who is not so happily situated?"

He hesitated a little longer, then answered, "Yes."

"In that case," I told them, "there's no point in going on with this discussion. The meeting is adjourned."

Up shot the thin arm of the reporter I can't remember. "How many people do you need to start a guild on a paper?" he asked.

"One," I said.

"All right, you've got a guild."

It turned out that he was correct.

HEYWOOD BROUN

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

THE JOYOUS SEASON

BY JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

PROBABLY no other age ever libeled itself as persistently and as enthusiastically as ours has done. If anyone doubts the fact he may begin by examining the list of "important books" published in this issue of *The Nation* and stopping a moment to consider how few of the works there listed, whether they be of imagination or scholarship, have anything favorable to say of human character or human institutions in America or Western Europe. Typical "Christmas books" are Mr. Farrell's "A World I Never Made," that brilliant and meticulous description of human degradation; Mr. Faulkner's rapturous fantasy on the varieties of diabolic experience called "Absalom, Absalom!" or, if one prefers non-fiction and is willing to go beyond our list, Robert Briffault's "Reasons for Anger," which so enthusiastically defends the thesis that not only our civilization but the entire civilization of the past is a damnable mistake. With our "best wishes for a happy New Year" we send books which seem to indicate little hope that those wishes can be gratified, and our favorite toast for the joyous season ought to be the one which Aldous Huxley proposed almost a generation ago. "Come fill the bowl with atrabilious liquor!"

The mention of Mr. Huxley will, moreover, serve to remind us that the habit of detraction was well fixed before the world depression came along to furnish new and solider material to feed the flames of our rage. Way back in the day when America was so prosperous that prosperity itself was regarded as an evil, "Main Street" and "The Spoon River Anthology" were commonly regarded as the quasi-official accounts of the state of the nation. Our happiest writer was Mr. Mencken, whom bile somehow exhilarated, and I think that it would be fair to say that there was a general tendency in England to regard Mr. Huxley and Mr. Lawrence as more representative of the newer spirit in letters than such relatively contented men as Arnold Bennett and John Galsworthy. Writers savage on the one hand and melancholy on the other have been common in the world's history, but it is clear enough, I think, that in few if any other epochs has spleen in its various manifestations unmistakably set the dominant tone of a literature as it sets it in the twentieth century. Satire has seldom seemed to take so little pleasure in itself, and tragedy has seldom been so unrelieved by grandeur.

Now I am far from wishing to undertake the impossible task of dismissing all this as merely the result of a persistent attack of the vapors which "could all be set right with calomel." It may be, indeed, that prophets of gloom would be justified in considering just the prevalence of this temper itself as an indication stronger than any objective fact or condition that "mankind is at the crossroads" or that some major crisis of the human spirit is at hand. But I do want to insist that one may easily make the mistake of assuming too readily the objectivity of literature itself and of concluding too hastily that human life is as much unhappier, that human beings are oppressed and mistreated as much worse today than ever before, as a mere study of the literature of this age would seem to indicate. Literature, after all, reflects interests, convictions, habitual emphases, and sensitivities quite as much as it reflects prevailing conditions. It is as much a mirror of our habits of thought as it is of our experiences; and we have today, in addition to problems and horrors enough, also the literary tradition of detraction and spleen, the habit of emphasizing the worst. The society of the eighteenth century in London could have supplied material for something like "A World I Never Made" just as readily as it did for "Tom Jones."

One result of that fact is that a writer feels an almost overwhelming pressure upon him to make out the worst case against his fellow-men that he is able to make. In its crudest form that pressure is exerted upon him through his desire for success. A mere best-seller may be cheerful, but cheerful books are almost automatically set down as best-sellers, and there is no doubt that a novelist who chose to describe whatever favorable aspects of the present social scene he might be able to discover would find an immediate tendency in intellectual circles to discount him as a writer. More subtly, even naturally optimistic or detached temperaments feel the pressure of the age. As an example I have in mind one particular talented writer who contributes frequently to *The Nation*. His natural tendency is to anthologize the eighteenth century or to discuss the technique of light verse. At another time he would have felt free to do just that; as it is he takes time off to denounce the social system, which is no worse than it was when La Rochefoucauld wrote. One is reminded of the gentleman in Boswell who complained, "When I was a young man I wanted very much to be a philospher; but no matter how hard I tried, cheerfulness kept breaking through." That was because he lived in an age of optimism. Had he lived today all literature would have conspired to help him keep it back.

Perhaps we are inclined at the present moment to lay almost too exclusive a stress upon the fact that "literature reflects social conditions." Lenin I believe said that. And so literature does, but in judging any age by its literature one should always remember that even to "reflect social conditions" is not quite the same as merely to give an ac-

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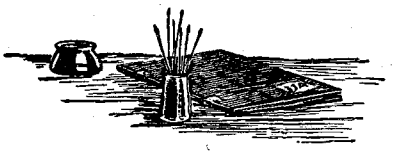

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count of facts. We admire realism and we think of literature as a picture of our times. We tend to forget how important in it is the element of *creation* as opposed to the element of *imitation*. Literature does not reflect merely what things are like but also what we think about them. It is a record of what we see, but it is also and at least as importantly an indication of what we want or fear, what we love or hate.

Contemporary fiction is full of social injustice. Man's inhumanity to man is prominent as it has been in few bodies of fiction ever composed before. That does not mean only or necessarily that man is more inhumane to man than in any previous period of the world's history. It means rather that we are more sensitive to such inhumanity and more completely obsessed by it. It is less a proof that this is the cruelest and most unjust age that ever existed than it is that we hate cruelty and injustice more than any age ever did before us.

And what is true of the significance of our social fiction is true of all the splenetic literature which immediately preceded it. Sinclair Lewis's "Babbitt" did not prove that we were the most complacently commonplace people in the world. It proved only that we were beginning very actively to hate the complacently commonplace. A hundred years hence literary historians may perhaps conclude that the twentieth century was the worst age in which to live that the world has ever known. They may, on the other hand, conclude merely that it was the most savagely self-critical.

BOOKS

From Stars to Bones

THE OXFORD BOOK OF MODERN VERSE. 1892-1935. Chosen by W. B. Yeats. Oxford University Press. $3.

THE "Oxford Book of Modern Verse" is, as Yeats points out in his delightful preface, a collection of poetry from the time—three years before the death of Tennyson—when poets wrote of stars to the present moment, when they write of bones. Editors of the earlier Oxford Books had a long perspective on their materials for selection. Yeats, in making this collection of *modern* verse, must rely on his own judgment. As the greatest living poet writing in English he was chosen editor; and he indicates, humorously, that he realizes the difficulty of his task. He must trace the development of poetry from the nineties, in which his own youthful poetry was born, down to the present, when his mature realistic poetry still to some extent dominates the scene. It is not strange, therefore, that he should allow, as he does, his own preferences their way. Thus, the Irish poets are given more than good measure of room in this book. Lyric poetry with a "lofty eloquence" is preferred; and poets with a tragic sense of life fare better than the poets of disillusionment. Only Eliot and Pound among American-born poets are included —this because of their long career as Englishmen. Realizing that he could not do justice to the storm and stutter of modern American poetry, Yeats leaves it all out.

In the last forty-three years poetry, as Yeats explains, has developed from a romantic rebellion against Victorianism and its moral discursiveness toward a more realistic approach to a concrete subject matter. England, in the nineties full of well-bred bohemianism, sobered when the century turned. The poetry of passion, or of flight from passion (aesthetic or religious), was diverted first into a poetry of naturalism, then a poetry of disillusion, and finally a poetry of social criticism. Mind came to be understood as conditioned behavior or as a flux of submerged imagery, and man, pitted against a mechanistic view of nature, was no longer envisioned as heroic. The tragedy of the human will fighting the gods, nature, society ceased to be the theme of great literature. Pathetic pantomime and the sound of small weepings filled the stage. As Stendhal said, and as Yeats repeats, all literature was for a time but a "mirror dawdling down a lane," a reflection of this or that aspect of man's private soul but no whole or designed picture. More recently man's will-to-believe has again asserted itself. It has been discovered that society is functioning according to certain laws, that human beings, also acting according to certain fundamental laws, must, of necessity, rise against such a society in order to change it. Some have held that man's force will prove greater than the social forces against him. Others hold that these social forces will win the battle and that man will return to barbarism.

It is Yeats's own belief that poets should espouse neither cause nor state. He fears that hatred confuses art. Nevertheless, as he indicates, he sees in the revolutionary poets a new intellectual passion. He rejoices that the tragic sense of life has returned. He is relieved to note again in poets a recognition that in a moment of belief any great action is possible. Therefore he admires the younger English poets who integrate their beliefs and their actions.

As a lyric poet Yeats prefers lyrics, and most of the poems included in this volume are selected accordingly. The poet-editor remarks that he dislikes the lack of rhythmical animation in Eliot's early poetry, an effect for which Eliot deliberately worked. He includes, therefore, only one or two of the early poems and The Hollow Men and Ash Wednesday, in which he finds the great manner. Pound, Yeats judges very correctly to be important chiefly as a translator. Hating war, he leaves out the war poets and includes instead Herbert Read's "The End of the War." This rather overwritten poem is certainly better than most war verse. Oscar Wilde comes in for editing at Yeats's hands. All of Wilde's most characteristic flourishes and poses are gone from his Ballad of Reading Gaol, which in this new version becomes an excellent straightforward narrative. Michael Field, the nom-de-plume for the collaborators, Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper, is included, and the fine classical lyrics of this composite poet are worth knowing. Arthur Symons is represented only very briefly. A. E., however, is given far too much space. Oliver Gogarty gets more pages than he deserves. Yeats admires Edith Sitwell—this is a strange affinity—and includes a good deal of her work. He speaks of her "temperament of strangeness so high-pitched that only through artifice could it find expression." Hugh McDiarmid—by all odds the finest of the truly revolutionary poets, a poet without benefit of Oxford or Cambridge—is not allowed enough pages.

To Walter James Turner and to Dorothy Wellesley, Yeats devotes paragraphs in his preface and many pages of his collection. These two poets are evidently his own discoveries. He believes that Turner, scientifically minded, has gained control again over plastic material. What Yeats really enjoys in this poet's work is rhetoric employed to enrich abstract

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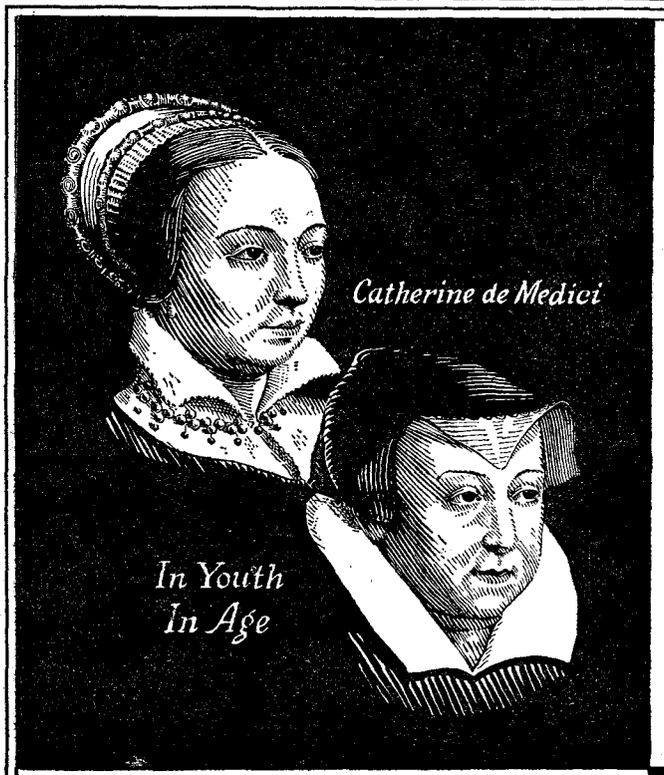

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thought. Turner's poems are metaphysical in the seventeenth-century sense of drawing opposites into conjunction by giving thought, but they are, I think, less important than Yeats believes. Dorothy Wellesley, on the other hand, is rather exciting. She writes with a very nervous, strong rhythm and employs an unusual visual imagery. I rather think, however, that she is less important than Auden, from whose work Yeats has chosen only a cheap satirical piece which, taken out of its context, means very little.

One reads and rereads this collection, quarreling here and there with Yeats's judgment, grateful now and then for the included fine selections from little-known minor poets. It is amusing to note in passing that Robert Graves and Laura Riding refused Yeats their poems. Having written a "Pamphlet Against Anthologies" they must, one supposes, be consistent.

EDA LOU WALTON

Tragedy of a Missionary

FIGHTING ANGEL. PORTRAIT OF A SOUL. By Pearl S. Buck. Reynal and Hitchcock. $2.50.

MRS. BUCK'S biography of her father stands rather thinly beside "The Exile," her biography of her mother. For the subject himself was thin. His children, Mrs. Buck included, knew relatively little about the tall wraith who spent most of his time in China away from the family, tramping the foul roads and preaching Presbyterianism to swarms of yellow faces. But nobody knew much about him, for the pathetic reason that there was not much to know. He was narrowed almost exactly to his purpose. There was a touch of humor in him from time to time, and in his old age he could move his daughters to pity. But through most of his eighty years he was colorlessly fanatical and drearily industrious, denying himself every pleasure of existence except the pleasure of doing his own work in his own way, decade after dogged decade. Carie, his wife, the heroine of "The Exile," was so much more interesting as a human creature that a reader may be tempted to decide that Andrew was not interesting at all. Yet it would be an error so to decide. For if he was thin he was intense; and the book which contains all there was of his soul is correspondingly instructive.

Andrew cut a poor figure in "The Exile," being represented there chiefly through his absences from Carie at critical moments in her life and through the indifference, if not the contempt, which each of his reappearances would express. Nor is it possible for Mrs. Buck now to say that she ever loved him. It is rather that she has settled down to saying how much he amazed her, even appalled her; and that in the course of doing so she has had to do him the justice of praising his strength. "The truth is," she admits, "that the early missionaries were born warriors and very great men, for in those days religion was still a banner under which to fight. . . . The early missionaries believed in their cause as men these days do not know how to believe in anything. . . . It is not a thing to smile at. . . . I have not seen anywhere the like of Andrew and his generation. . . . They were proud and quarrelsome and brave and intolerant and passionate. There was not a meek man among them. . . . The giants are gone." All of which explains how it is that in writing the life of Andrew Mrs. Buck has been able to write a tragedy. For if she had had less respect for her father's power she would not have known how to suggest the irony of his success.

His success was his tragedy. He did succeed in doing what he wanted to do, and for the simple reason that nothing could have stopped him. But this meant that from every other point of view he was a failure. He was feared rather than loved. His colleagues found him difficult to work with, and saw better than anyone else how badly he adjusted his effort to the actual situation before him. He never knew China, or knew that it was changing, just as he never suspected that many of his converts were converts in name only—were, in fact, more heathen than ever behind his back. He was perhaps as blind as a man with eyes can be; he saw only one thing, his goal, compared with which every other object, even though it might be a Chinese soul, was insubstantial. At seventy, forced to retire from "the field," he may be supposed to have entertained for a moment the thought that much of his work had counted for little. But he could never have entertained the unstated thesis of this book, which is that all of it counted for nothing, the world being for better or worse the same old world, unutterably unredeemed. He went through every danger to get the one thing he wanted, and got it. That is the tragedy of Andrew.

MARK VAN DOREN

Strachey on Socialism

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SOCIALISM. By John Strachey. Random House. $3.

IN HIS first book, "The Coming Struggle for Power," Strachey gave promise of developing into a vigorous and even brilliant commentator on the contemporary social scene. At that time he had no overpowering preconceptions, and his writing displayed a real freshness of style which encouraged many of us to hope for great things from him in the future. But his next substantial work, "The Nature of Capitalist Crisis," gave rise to doubts. Strachey had evidently acquired ambitions to become a social scientist, but he had just as evidently not given the necessary time and effort to his studies in the field. He had bitten off more economics than he could chew, and the result was that his criticism of "bourgeois" economics was as feeble as his attempt to expound Marxian theory. One comes, therefore, to his most recent and most pretentious work, "The Theory and Practice of Socialism," not knowing quite what to expect.

The book justifies the initial skepticism. Mr. Strachey has by now, it seems, assumed the role of systematizer on the grand scale. The present work purports to be nothing less than a general presentation of the Marxian analysis of capitalism and socialism, together with an account of Marxism itself. The result, it must be confessed, is not a very happy one. Except for a few all too brief interludes, the style is heavy and textbookish; and Strachey's attitude toward his readers is frequently smug and patronizing.

His treatment of the various subjects touched upon is, naturally enough, uneven. On the Soviet Union, he draws extensively and almost exclusively from the Webbs. It is certainly desirable that a book on socialism should make use of the experience of the only existing Socialist community; but it is indicative of how little we know about how the Soviet Union really works, particularly in the economic sphere, that nothing more analytically penetrating than the Webbs' (in many ways excellent) two volumes is available. Again, on some subjects, such as dialectical materialism, Strachey merely repeats what have been the commonplaces of popular Marxist literature ever since Engels wrote his "Anti-Dühring." On the other hand, Strachey sometimes achieves a really original and highly stimulating treatment of his subject matter, as, for example, in his Part III, on So-

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cialism and the Working Class, where he traces the origins and development of Socialist thought and action in the history of the British working class. This section makes one hope that Strachey will apply himself to the task of producing that full-dress history of Chartism from the Marxist standpoint the lack of which he deplores. It is in fields like this, I think, that Strachey could do full justice to his very considerable talents as historian and interpreter of social events.

Strachey maintains that the trouble with capitalism is not that it does not distribute enough purchasing power, as most currency reformers would have us believe, but rather that it distributes purchasing power so unevenly. The result is that those with big incomes can satisfy all their desires for consumers' goods with a small proportion of their income and must invest the rest, that is, purchase ever more means of production. But since the market for consumers' goods does not expand, and since these means of production must ultimately produce more consumers' goods, a contradiction arises which can only be resolved by the destruction of means of production and/or the conquest of new markets. This leads to the two phenomena of imperialist expansion and periodic crises, with the latter becoming ever more severe as capitalism develops.

Now the objection to this analysis is that a flexible—that is, fully competitive—capitalist system takes care of the problem automatically. The heaping up of the means of production leads to the lowering of the return on capital (the rate of interest), while the competition of capitalists for labor to make these means of production drives up the rate of wages. Everything seems to work beautifully; and if the process eventually goes so far as to wipe out the return on capital altogether, well, so much the worse for the capitalists! It is no answer to this argument to assert that we do not have such a flexible capitalist system; for to explain why we do not is precisely the problem which must be solved. Marx realized this, though he did not state the problem clearly. Nevertheless, he does give an answer. This, he says in effect, is indeed the tendency of capitalism, but it is precisely this tendency on the part of capitalism to wipe out the capitalists which forces them continually to revolutionize the methods of production, and by introducing labor-saving machinery to keep the natural upward tendency of wages within bounds. This elaboration of machinery makes ever larger the scale of production and leads straight out of the realm of competition into that of monopoly. In this stage capitalism ceases to be the sort of thing it used to be; in fact, it enters the stage of imperialism, the importance of which Lenin sensed, but of which he was unable to provide a satisfactory economic analysis.

The truth is that it is impossible to give a static analysis of what is wrong with capitalism, as Strachey essentially tries to do. For the nature of capitalism contradicts the attempt. It seems surprising that a Marxist should not see the point, and especially one who stresses the importance of what he calls the "Law of Motion of Capitalism" (Chapter 29). But the real reason for the failure is not far to seek. It lies in the belief that the essence of Marx's theory of capitalist development is the labor theory of value. The labor theory of value is in fact a purely static theory, and a rather clumsy one at that. So long as Marxists are not able to shake off the preconception that all wisdom flows from the labor theory of value, they will be unable to make use of and develop what were Marx's really fundamental and enduring contributions to the science of economics.

In closing, I should like to add that for those who have not yet made the acquaintance of the Marxian approach to capitalism and socialism, Strachey's book, despite its shortcomings, provides a very useful starting-point. If, as I suspect, this was one of its main functions, then it may with justice be described as a successful effort.

PAUL M. SWEEZY

The Nationalization of Business

THE NATIONALIZING OF BUSINESS, 1878-1898. (A HISTORY OF AMERICAN LIFE, Vol. IX.) By Ida M. Tarbell. The Macmillan Company. $4.

THE twenty-year period with which Miss Tarbell deals is peculiarly significant in American history. These two decades, interestingly enough, begin with recovery from the depression inaugurated in 1873 and end with the close of the depression announced by the panic of 1893. Of special importance are the years 1879-93, for they constitute, despite several lean years in the middle eighties, a major period of economic expansion.

The great advance in land occupation, the twenty-five-million increase in population, the growth of the domestic market, the striking technological advances, the tremendous exploitation of natural resources, the utilization of new sources of fuel and power, the changes in transportation and communication, the development of new business forms, the modifications in the system of distribution, and the developments in banking and finance which occurred in these years wrought profound transformations in the American scene. By 1898 an industrial capitalist order was firmly established. A once rural and agricultural land had become essentially urban and industrial.

This period was also an age of protest and revolt in which industrial laborers, farmers, and a handful of intellectuals participated. It witnessed the rapid rise and collapse of the Knights of Labor and the birth of the American Federation of Labor. It produced the pulsating labor movement of the middle eighties and bitter industrial conflicts, among which Homestead and Pullman loom large. Agrarian protest, expressing itself in turn in greenbackism, free silver, and the farmers' alliances, finally culminated in the Populist crusade. From the extreme left there came an energetic attack upon the existing order by Anarchists and Socialists, while a distinctly native radicalism appeared in the philosophy of Henry George.

All this and more falls within the scope of "The Nationalizing of Business," and it is unfortunate that the volume contributes little to an adequate picture of these developments or to an understanding of their significance and consequences. It has no real value as a study in social history, and suffers from distressing shallowness as a work in economic history. An uncritical attitude leads Miss Tarbell to repeat many half-truths and myths, most of which have been long exploded, and to create some new ones. A complete catalogue of the sins of commission and omission with which Miss Tarbell may be fairly charged cannot be undertaken here. But some of her offenses must be indicated.

She depends to an unusual degree, in a work of this kind, upon secondary sources. Recent studies not in agreement with her views are ignored. An obvious instance is her use of the material in McElroy's "Grover Cleveland" for the Pullman strike rather than the account in Allan Nevins's biography of Cleveland. She frequently suppresses essential evidence. In her version of the Homestead strike, for example, there is no

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mention of Carnegie's decision to make Homestead non-union, or of his complete support of Frick's actions. Her regard for the life of personal achievement leads to adulation of the "strong men" of the period—witness the saintly portraits of Carnegie and many of his contemporaries. She partially justifies the huge profits made by the "leaders" of industry in terms of the "benefits" the country "derived" from their activities. She says nothing about the development of banking and finance, and barely touches upon the house of Morgan. Her treatment of railroad and trust legislation and Populism are especially inadequate and superficial. She believes that "the conditions of the wage-earners had . . . greatly improved in the twenty years," but she offers no evidence. "On the whole," she writes, "labor issued from [the industrial] conflicts [of the period] more successfully than capital, primarily because what it sought was so often just."

But enough. The volume is smoothly written. Beyond that it has no major virtue, and it is no distinction for the "A History of American Life" series to have Miss Tarbell's work in it.

HENRY DAVID

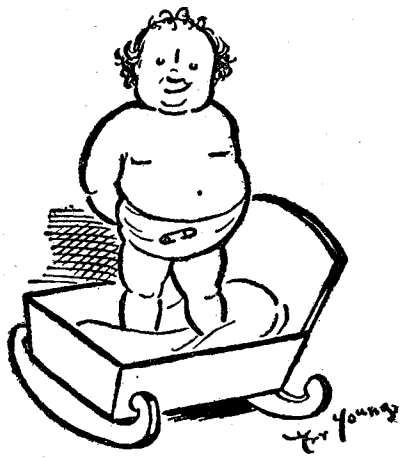
Two Kinds of Love

PAUL GAUGUIN'S INTIMATE JOURNALS. Translated by Van Wyck Brooks. Preface by Emil Gaugin. Crown Publishers. $2.75.

THE BEST OF ART YOUNG. With an Introduction by Heywood Broun. The Vanguard Press. $3.

THE antinomy between Gauguin's painting and his writing is startling: the one calm, sweeping, and static, the other tortured, myopic, and ecstatic. Had he received early recognition his life might have been more like his painting and less as it was. Actually, the attempt of his son to debunk the Gauguin myth smacks a little too much of the antics of the French Academy after the death of Anatole France. It is too late to tame the author of such pages as these.

Physiological honesty was his God, "breeches morality" his Antichrist. Perhaps no one ever more vehemently hated the professional good woman who waves her virtue and her baby



The Beginning—Self-Portrait

as a harlot waves her breasts and hips. "Virtue!" he exclaims; "I know all about it but I do not like it." His bravado is often obvious: "I should like to be a pig; man alone can be ridiculous." There was pathos in these Timonisms, which he himself explained: "I wish to love and I cannot. I wish not to love and I cannot." He belonged to his own category of men who are "misogynists because they love women too much." So he was always an Adam looking for Eve and not finding her even in a South Sea Garden of Eden.

"Gauguin, the savage, who hates a whimpering civilization," Strindberg called him. As a matter of fact he was terribly confused by what Clarence Day called "this simian world." So he wrote. "This is not a book; it is nothing but idle chatter," he insists. He did not really want to write but he had "a

great many things to say, *and they must be said.*" The result is something of a book! His defiance was splendid, too. "Giant, you are mortal," he confesses; but "why fabricate tears in order to shed them?" Better "spend yourself, spend yourself again! Run till you are out of breath and die madly." He did.

Unlike "Noa Noa," which was tidied up and made as respectable as possible by Charles Morice, these journals are undiluted Gauguin. On reading them we are first struck with their utter modernity. They are not only post-Joycean; they are also post-Huxleyan. Gauguin's thought, however, was not colloid but crystalloid—faceted. True, one too often encounters the dangerously penetrating gems in a matrix of naive childishness, but they are gems nevertheless. And gems are always rare. Not only painting but likewise literature comes in for cruelly just comments. An example is his sly reference to "our great academician, Pierre Loti."

Reproductions of his paintings and drawings enrich the book. Though Gauguin himself remarked that we can get along "without mural paintings. One ought always to feel the wall," even his smallest canvasses have a curiously mural quality. This doubtless arises from his constant meticulous regard for every rectangular space he filled with design. "Decoration is not landscape, it is decoration," he insisted. At one time in Brittany he developed a "synthetist" formula which sometimes resulted in what might almost be dubbed emotional wallpaper! In his later paintings the color pattern grew increasingly instinctive and less formulated. His figures usually possess a semi-Egyptian calm and immobility. At his greatest he seems the avatar of some ancient and primitive magician. His compositional rhetoric, however, could easily become monotonous in the hands of one who was not a genius. At first sight his works do not seem original to us because we have

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seen so many pictures by artists influenced by men he influenced.

It is pleasant to record that the feral Gauguin was kind to savages and children. Perhaps he had hope for them! Of children he said: "They are my disciples, those of the second renaissance." "God never rests," he mused in his island home and worked on to the end—as strange, as wistful, as intransigent a creator as our times have seen.

The translation before us is a comfort and a joy. This reviewer has not seen the original MS, but anyone who has stood aghast while his own alchemy transmuted Gallic fire into Anglo-Teutonic smoke will know that Van Wyck Brooks has done here a beautiful job.

Art Young never fled to an exotic clime, though apparently he relishes "civilization" as little as Gauguin did. Good-

Boiling Mad

tempered instead of ill-tempered, he stayed and fought. The present reviewer met him only once, years ago, and promptly evolved from the visit a very bad pun anent loving Art and keeping Young. The man is vividly human, lacking in personal rancor, richly humorous, and actually seems to believe that individuals should be happy as well as hold certain opinions. His sterner colleagues are inclined to look askance, smile with him, and even adore him.

Heywood Broun in his introduction to the present volume fears that there is concealed "in the heart and mind of Art Young something of the Utopian heresy." And, after all, a man who starts out drawing an inhuman hell and after half a lifetime winds up by drawing almost human trees must be conceded to be not only a wit and a philosopher but a poet as well. Plato would probably have found use for him in the New State.

Art Young is a challenge to smugness, whether in reactionary or radical. Whenever the writer of these lines is informed anew that the revolution is about to start he always hopes that there are plenty of Art Youngs in it. He would be a swell reconstructionist of devastated war areas.

In his youth, he writes, his entire interest was in "composition, light and shade, and all that goes with creative work." Later he adopted the current religion—and trouble began. Nevertheless, he has always retained more than a *soupçon* of humanism, nearer in spirit to Rabelais than to Swift, to Cervantes than to Gorki.

This is not to say that he is not a doughty soldier of his convictions. He is absolutely fearless. It is not always the bitterest who fight the hardest, and Art Young is the real Happy Warrior. His present volume is fascinating. The drawing is conservative and, though he studied at Paris, in the English tradition of Rowlandson, Leech, and Tenniel. He is the worthy successor of Nast, Keppler, and Gillam in this country. His wit is Old American in flavor. It's a pity he never illustrated Mark Twain. Why not yet? His best artistic life began at forty. We have no pithier phrase-maker and no funnier satirical draftsman. His drawings of pitiful children are heart-wringing and his challenges to his opponents high clarion.

CYRIL KAY-SCOTT

A "New" Rochefoucauld

LA ROCHEFOUCAULD: THE MAXIMS. Newly Translated with a Foreword by Louis Kronenberger. Stackpole Sons. $1.75.

THE aphorisms of La Rochefoucauld are a tempting morsel to the translator, since in them we have a world classic, barely twenty thousand words in length, which enjoys a survival greater even than its fame (for La Rochefoucauld is usually quoted by people who do not even know his name), and which in its original form was pondered in every detail of thought, language, and style. Strangely enough, in spite of the long list of translations, there has been no altogether adequate English version, nor do I think that Mr. Kronenberger alters that situation.

The problem of translating the aphorisms is exquisitely historical. La Rochefoucauld did such thinking as he did—never any very great amount—in the grossly synthetic terms of his day in France. He knew something that he called "passions," which he found at war with another something that he called "virtues," and both passions and virtues operated in the actions involved in living in certain ill-defined relations to a thing that he calls now "wisdom," now "skill," now "judgment." There are those who speak of a "philosophy" of La Rochefoucauld. One can only say that a philosopher who would try to get at the fact of human activity with such theoretical tools would be about as well equipped as a man who expects to chop wood with a sledge hammer. But however vague this type of thinking may be, it confronts the translator as a problem. And it is all but unsolvable. The Cartesian tradition has not contributed to the plain man's English anywhere nearly as rich a vocabulary as it contributed to the salon French of La Rochefoucauld's day. What is one to do with an expression like *amour-propre?* The English tradition of translations has preferred "self-love," which is perhaps as good as anything, since neither "egoism" nor much less "selfishness" will do. Mr. Kronenberger cuts the Gordian knot now with the word "vanity," now with the expression "self-esteem," and those devices yield him a number of exceedingly well-turned apothegms; but not only are they not La Rochefoucauld's—they completely obscure the philosophical theme which, after all, gives the "Maxims" a certain unity. La Rochefoucauld himself draws a consistent distinction between *amour-propre* and "vanity." I will not speak of actual errors, which are not infrequent in Mr. Kronenberger's version, though they do not figure in the versions of his predecessors.

On the side of style I cannot see that La Rochefoucauld made any great effort at terseness or smartness. His style is "quiet," subtle, elegant; not forceful, pointed, sharp. Mr. Kronenberger at one point reduces La Rochefoucauld from sixty-eight to twenty-eight words. That preoccupation too is non-historical and not genuine La Rochefoucauld. In general I believe that Mr. Kronenberger would have done better by following the English tradition more closely and trying to perfect it, rather than by trying to add a "new" Rochefoucauld to the many "new" ones that have been proposed in the past (the Pratt version, for instance, of five years ago, was the version of a man

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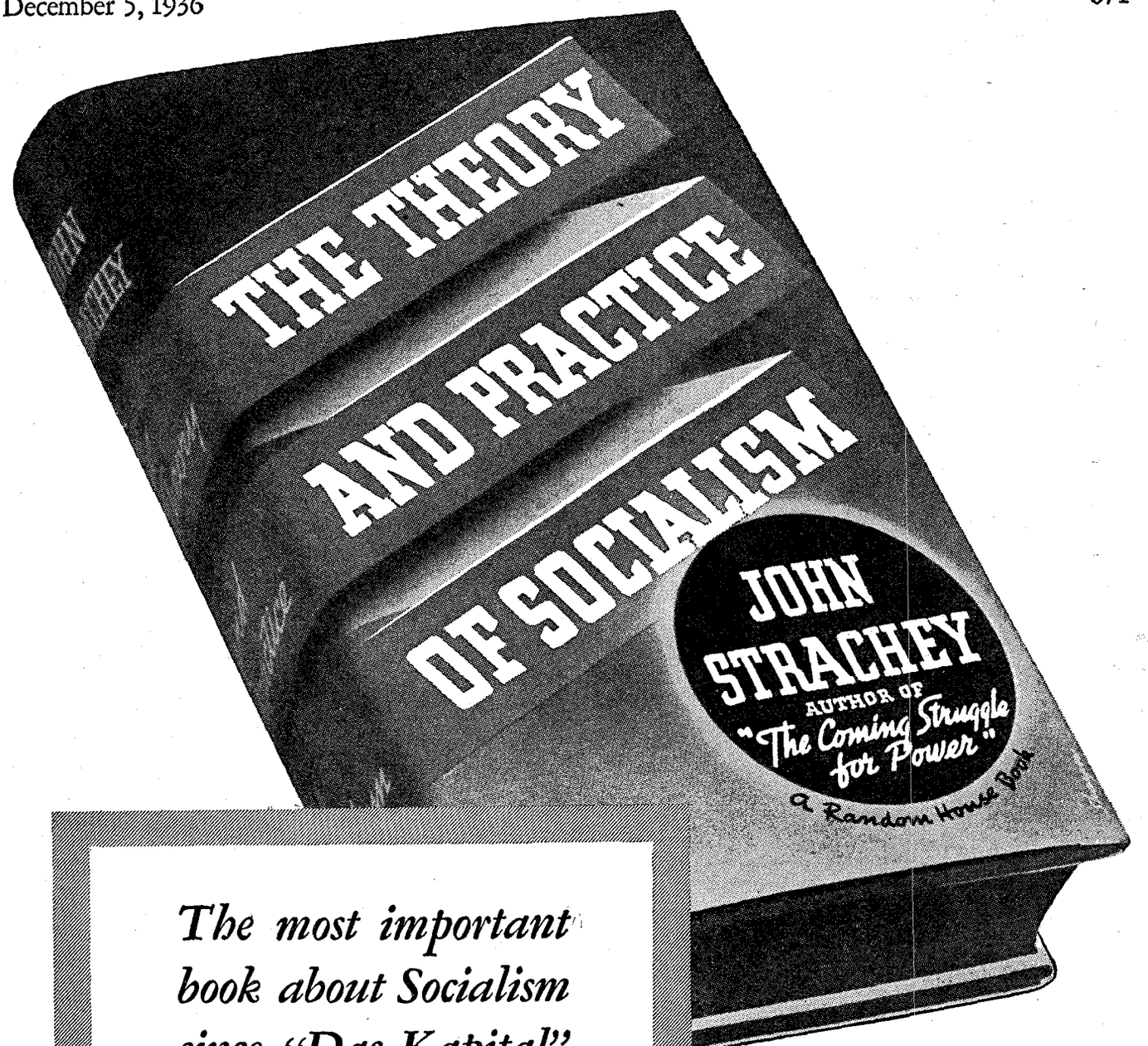

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who was doing La Rochefoucauld after reading, I imagine, Walter Pater on Giordano Bruno). The English tradition requires plenty of perfecting. Why in Maxim VII has it occurred to no one to render *les politiques* by "statesmen," or to reduce La Rochefoucauld's preciosity, *guerre,* to the exact "struggle" in place of a generic "war"? Mr. Kronenberger's rendering of this maxim is mistaken throughout. In the end the author of the "definitive" version of the Maxims will, I predict, have to borrow to a large extent from an older English.

ARTHUR LIVINGSTON

Outside the Persian Garden

HALF THE WORLD IS ISFAHAN. By Caroline Singer and Cyrus LeRoy Baldridge. The Oxford University Press. $5.

THERE is a considerable difference between the temper of Mr. Baldridge's drawings for "Half the World Is Isfahan" and Miss Singer's running text. The quotation from Gertrude Lothian Bell introducing the observations—"Every man carries a different pair of eyes with him, and no two people would answer the question in the same fashion"—applies to these fellow-travelers in Iran. The illustrations, graceful in line, mood, and color, might be used to advantage by the advertising department of a travel bureau beckoning customers to a picturesque far-off land. The text, although admittedly "sketchbook" in character and with an eye to the unique, leaves the impression that one may be thankful the proverb is not true, that a world half Isfahan would be just too much—both for the other half of the world and for many Iranian natives as well. The observations would, of course, not deter—they might definitely attract—students of history, anthropologists, seekers of the unusual; but in this volume of travels among the descendants of Great Cyrus one misses the infectious lively pleasure the authors seemed to experience in the Pacific countries commemorated in "Turn to the East."

In the year of time spent in Iran Mr. Baldridge and Miss Singer covered full 4,000 years of history—from the living primitives of 1936 to the buried primitives of Cyrus's reign and beyond, now being excavated layer by layer. They found a country of poverty, hard extremes of climate, and antagonistic races and religious—Moslems, Christians, Sufis, Jews, Zoroastrians, often several quarreling sects of each; slow, almost reluctant to throw off shackles of tradition, in spite of government commands. About one-fourth of the population are nomads, whose search for herbage for their flocks was recorded in the beautiful picture "Grass" some years ago. Manufacture, though primitive, reduces men to machines in an unmechanized economy—the authors watched the printing of cotton fabrics, each man printing in only one color, human Ben-Day processes. Real craftsmanship or originality of design is practically unknown. Great in the background is Anglo-Persian oil. And over all is the yellow dust of Iran, filling noses and mouths. One almost expects to hear of contests among Iranian sages who take a drink of water and see which can spit the straightest mud-pie, in the manner of American country-store champions aiming tobacco juice at the stove. But water is scarce in Iran. As in Egypt and other spots in this part of the world, the water makes Omar's rhapsodies over a jug of wine more sense than poetry. Typhoid and other unsanitary diseases are plentiful.

Neutral in the World War, "protected" by the mutual understanding between England and Russia, citizens of Iran are suspicious of Russia and England alike. At the entrance to every village and city the authors were asked by the ever-present collector of *cartes d'identité,* "Are you Russian?" "Are you English?" Starting rumors and spreading them is the great national pastime—rumors about the minister of the court, about other countries, about persons of humble station. Only rarely is there mention of a person of dignity or integrity, or saintliness—the Sufi dervish, a Jewish scholar, a very few others.

The volume produced by the collaboration of Miss Singer and Mr. Baldridge is a very handsome volume indeed, although probably of more interest to the collector of beautiful books than to the serious student of world problems. The really charming color pages and the marginal sketches of domed background, streets, hills, and people show pleasantly the varieties of scenes and types. The informative travel material of the text is supplemented by amusing anecdotes—the one about Mohammed and the Armenian who ghost-wrote the Koran will probably be remembered as a warning to ghost writers, "In'sh'Allah." In sum, the book supplies a lively movietone introduction to a country which for many is only a four-letter synonym for Persia in the cross-word puzzles, an introduction attractive enough to tempt abstainers from more ponderous fare.

B. E. BETTINGER

Courage, Right and Wrong

NEW DIRECTIONS IN PROSE AND POETRY. Edited by James Laughlin IV. New Directions: Norfolk, Conn. $2.

NEW WRITING II. AUTUMN 1936. Edited by John Lehmann. The Bodley Head. 6 shillings.

THE NEW CARAVAN. Edited by Alfred Kreymborg, Lewis Mumford, Paul Rosenfeld. W. W. Norton and Company. $3.95.

"THE fertile periods of literature are those of philological innovation," James Laughlin says; and in his stating of the purpose of "New Directions" he is informed, modest, open, and orderly. But modesty in the other sense does not mark the story by him, A Natural History. There is talent in it, and in his poem The Cat and Dog at Love's Door; and prudery in itself is a kind of obscenity. But it is not prudery to regret that this young patriot, helping to lead us out of the wilderness, in company with the editors of the other two books under discussion, should like them have courage of the wrong sort as well as of the right. The conspicuous item in "New Directions" is the self-reflexive essay by Jean Cocteau subtitled The Painter Chirico, in which the author, reciting as it were with eyes closed, exhibits a macabre irony and counterfeits cadaverousness with health in a way not short of wonderful. The translation by Olga Rudge is also of interest—showing that gifted intuition transcends small errors. John Wheelwright, critic and poet, contributes four Elegies of wirily obdurate rhythm. One sees by the cautiously exerted strength and effect of ulterior brilliance in The Gentleman of Shalott and two other poems by her that Elizabeth Bishop is serious and a writer. One suspects that Mary Barnard too, somewhat leanly represented by three poems, has a "future." Woodrow Wilson said we must have peace without victory, and Wallace Stevens writes sternly these days on the subject of peace *with* victory. He contributes to "New Directions" a group of poems distinct as usual in sound and substance, and to "The New Caravan" a poem about a triumphal statue of "gawky plaster," in a world in which covetousness is replacing patriotism, and Minerva's owl, the quaint citizen of Athens, is becoming a murderer. Kay Boyle, represented by three one-page stories, has a suicidal desire to be revenged

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on fate for having withheld something that she wishes; but even without it has a weapon which deserves a magnificent edge. Ezra Pound's wry wit and successfully unique use of italics appear in a tiny Canto—useful for comparison with his flock of imitators. We have a straight look from William Carlos Williams as contributor of a prose episode called A Face of Stone; and he has seldom done better than in his poem, Perpetuum Mobile: The City. Miss Stein also is present.

"New Writing," a bi-annual magazine in book form, "aims at providing an outlet" for writers whose work is held in question by "established magazines." Like "New Directions," this book does not threaten to founder through fear of prudery, but there are in it examples of deep insight and superior writing. George Orwell's Shooting an Elephant, which indelibly pictures mob power, is not only penetrating but unforgettable: "They had not shown much interest in the elephant when he was merely ravaging their homes, but it was different now that he was going to be shot." "When the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys." Mulk Raj Anand—contributor to "Life and Letters Today" and author of possibly the best condensed history of Persian painting that we have—has the turn of mind and the wording of a poet; creative inaccuracies of phraseology which are accuracies of meaning, impossible to any native American or Englishman; a mastering of dialect, that is to say, which preserves traces of foreignness, as in the plural for the singular, "she had touched the edges of prosperity." He has high humor and fine content: the converting of handicap into power. Martin Freedgood's Good Nigger and Leslie Halward's Boss are graphic and memorable.

"The New Caravan" set out to be "a collection of recent America's real and organic thoughts," and one hopes that Sheldon Cheney, writing of The Art Theater Twenty Years After, is typically and organically American and may everlastingly be so. "A few of us . . . believe," he says, "that the theater can be so potent . . . that it may be one of the agencies changing social environment," but "what room is there for conviction, for faith, when an author is writing . . . about the petty personal activities of unimportant faithless people?" In the work of certain co-contributors he is confronted by the very thing which he begs us to overcome—a diseased and selfish insufficiency; and when editors muddy the purity of criticism by the demure implication that we further art by presenting refuse to which cold-hearted publishers are inhospitable, the impurity under the guise of purity is doubly a reproach. Mr. Cheney, however, is not the only sound soul which the "Caravan" values. Ruth Lechlitner's group of poems has authority; Song of Starlings especially, in the rhythmic force of gravity which precedes the last stanza; and her biographical note is a model of trustworthy sensibility and firm technique. There are two poems by Anne Porter which reflect character; as, in turn, her biographical note approximates poetry. E. E. Cummings is represented by an expert biographical note rather than by his somewhat self-concealing two pages in the body of the book. To Conrad Aiken, Socrates's Greece and our cathedrals equally are shadows; social goodwill is hypocrisy, home life is lifeless. Stanley Burnshaw, on the other hand, says defeat is not defeat, and in The Driving Song bids you "Trust the dim light that drives The torrents of your blood." Marsden Hartley, chivalrous and shrewd—a painter writing about painters—has in two reminiscences given us what one hopes is part of a book. He speaks of the hands of Charles Demuth, "Chinese in character," that seemed "to be living a life of their own"; of his paintings, "harmoni-

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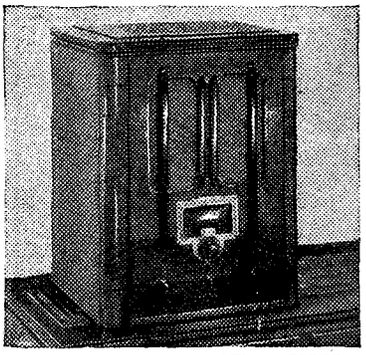

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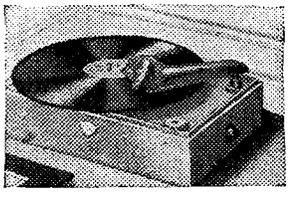

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ous, possibly to excess" but reflecting "a master of the comic insinuation"; and in the other memoir—Albert P. Ryder—says, "A great spirit was among us, finding, despite the thirteen cents a day, that he could live copiously in that world of greater experience in which . . . the only immoral act is not to do one's best work. . . . Be humble before the deep purpose of the universe, Ryder would seem to be always saying." Emjo Bashee in his play about the masses has constructed an apparent monotony which is a rivet-driver of impact at every point. Clarkson Crane and Ernest Brace are close observers. One applauds Paul Corey's description of the tractor-binder needle "flashing over the straw like a snake striking," and Philip Stevenson's ball-game lines: "When a batter slowed his swing for a curve or speeded it for a fast straight one, timed it right, met it square, and cracked it on a line for a hit—well—." The professional balance and ripely humorous humanitarianism of this latter story do a great deal for the "Caravan." In his play, The Dead Are Free, Alfred Kreymborg says "gabbling women gobble time"; and Edna Bryner in her story, Prelude and Fugue, also coins an aphorism: "Scoop away the scum and the water is still stagnant." This story has energy, verisimilitude, and charm, despite a few touches which if true to life ought not to be, and an aesthetic courage which gives the writing at times a rococo, insisted-upon effect. Eva Goldbeck's soliloquy, There Was No Time, is keenly applicable to all of us but in relation to the author's subsequent death seems sociologically both a dagger and a ghost.

Judged by our experimental writing, we are suffering today from unchastity, sadism, blasphemy, and rainsoaked foppishness; and since warnings to editors are not heeded, one would like to ask of one's fellow-writers, Is publication always better for one's talent than temporarily thwarted ambition? And since we can no longer depend upon the chivalry of editors to protect us against appearing at our worst, must we not achieve our own rigor? MARIANNE MOORE

DRAMA

Fool of God

ACCORDING to the Group, which is producing "Johnny Johnson" at the Forty-fourth Street Theater, the piece in question is a "legend." That phrase will serve well enough in its place on the program, but it will hardly do to describe the curious fantasy, half musical and half dramatic, which Paul Green and Kurt Weil have concocted between them. The matter is as serious as possible, the manner often so broad as almost to suggest vaudeville or a revue, and yet the whole is somehow strangely effective. I am, in general, no great partisan of the experimental techniques, but "Johnny Johnson" is both amusing enough and moving enough to justify itself very handsomely indeed.

The hero is a sort of fool of God, an innocent young man who finally gets into the Great War because he believes it to be really a war to end war, and then baffles everyone from the drill sergeant into whose hands he falls first to the high command itself because he is too simple and too good to be understood by any person even normally complex or normally corrupt. Finally, he is sent to a hospital for mental cases, and

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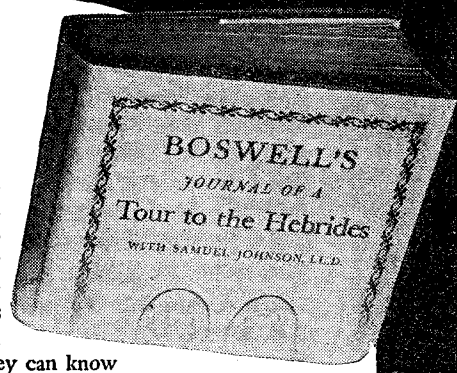

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Dorothy PARKER

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there, in what is perhaps the best scene of all, a psychiatrist diagnoses the case. Johnny is suffering from a rare disorder—the St. Francis complex.

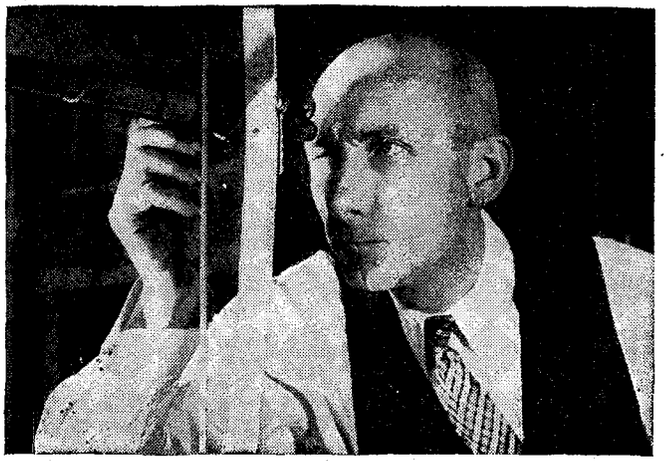
Everyone will, I fancy, agree that the piece is at times ragged and uncertain. Every now and then the mood is broken, every now and then the author of the text seems to lose his sense of style, and to write a speech or a scene too realistic on the one hand or too near burlesque on the other really to harmonize with the dominant manner, which is poised at some definite point between the two. But however far short it may fall of perfection, its success in general is never in doubt, and the thing is held together by Kurt Weil's score, which seems to me not only ideal for the purpose but consistent in a way that the text is not.

Unfortunately, I am not technically competent to describe that score, much less to evaluate it. I can only say that I was fascinated by Weil's music some years ago when I first heard it at the strangely unappreciated production of "The Three Penny Opera," and that even to my untrained ear the new music is original in the same immediately recognizable way. Superficially, Weil seems to employ with almost equal facility any one of the idioms of popular music. He writes things which sound like military marches, popular ballads, or jazz tunes. But what he is really writing is some sort of mordant commentary on each. Whichever manner he seems to have adopted is always somehow subtly perverted; so that instead of lulling with the familiar it stirs one with a strange uneasiness. Sometimes the general effect is merely satiric; more often it is curiously morbid and insidiously disturbing to the nerves, filling one with an indefinable sense that all is not what it seems and not quite what one has comfortably supposed it to be. More than merely suitable to Paul Green's text, it is, I think, more perfectly realized, and serves to give a unity that the text itself is not always able to maintain.

This comic opera—if that is what it is—is very competently acted by members of the regular company of the Group, which evidently decided that a certain amateur quality in the singing was appropriate. On the whole the judgment was right, and most of the time the voices are quite adequate although there are occasional relatively ambitious passages to which the technical skill of the singers is simply inadequate. Perhaps it is worth while to add that "Johnny Johnson"—partly because it is genuinely entertaining despite its serious undertone—is likely to have a larger measure of success than is usually the lot of "experiments." I suspect that it will be genuinely popular.

So far, I have seen only the first of the three programs of short plays which Noel Coward and Gertrude Lawrence are presenting at the National Theater under the non-committal title, "This Evening at 8:30." Somehow or other Mr. Coward has it established as a fact that any appearance by him is a fashionable event, and I found two of the skits thoroughly amusing—especially the first one about the busy lady in the fast set who gets her engagements mixed and spends a hectic half-hour trying to discover the identity of two people whom she has apparently asked for cocktails. Miss Lawrence seems to get more expert as well as more attractive from year to year; she is superb both as the bewildered lady and as the small-time variety performer in the third piece. The middle one, a rather high-flown tragedy, was supposed to have substance but failed to come off so far as I am concerned, and the audience laughed twice when it wasn't supposed to—a pretty serious matter for a sophisticated playwright. Somehow, the less Mr. Coward has to work with the better he is. When he takes nothing he makes something out of it; but when he takes something he makes nothing.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH



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Doubtless our playwrights will have more to say on the subject of the Alaskan resettlement project, for, as "200 Were Chosen" (Forty-eighth Street Theater) is the first to point out, it is a lode too rich to go unexplored for long. Meanwhile E. P. Conkle's narrative is so persuasively argued by its thirty-two protagonists that there is some temptation to convert its flaws into virtues by reading "scope" for "diffuseness," "simplicity" for "oversimplification," "lack of pretension" for "lack of resourcefulness," and so on. The facts, however, are plain enough to undermine the play by the middle of the second act: merely, it is insufficient to compile an anthology of types and saddle them to a proposition that pioneers are as easily made into brigands by their own frailties and the bungling of those in command. The theme itself is of importance: but too much of its weight in the present case has been shifted from the context proper to the shoulders of the individual actors. It is the happy accident of its Actors' Repertory sponsorship that those receiving the burden not only are capable of bearing it well and effortlessly but supply an emphasis of their own even when the text is found wanting. B. B.

FILMS

Oriental Cowboy

"SON OF MONGOLIA" (Amkino) is the only Russian film in a year which I have been able to enjoy without reservation. Even then I was uncertain during the first few minutes, when some business having to do with the introduction of Dulma's three suitors looked very much like the horseplay which has disfigured most recent films from a similar source. The Russians, I started to remind myself, are hopelessly horselike in their laughter and incorrigibly bearlike in their loves—all this, too, in an attempt to be kittenish like Hollywood. But the uncertainty was soon over. It became plain at once that the shepherdess Dulma preferred the shepherd Tseven to either of his rivals, and that the film was settling down to be something other than a wrestling match among the three. The affair of Dulma and Tseven did as a matter of fact turn out to be simple, convincing, and attractive. But this was incidental to something else: to a film packed full of fascinating and informing novelties, and to a story distinguished by the presence everywhere in it of a vast, happy, and primeval good-nature.

Producers of films should never forget the delight we take in mere information, mere novelty, and should never make the mistake of supposing that we can tire of being conducted by the camera into worlds we have not seen before. If "Son of Mongolia" were nothing but a newsreel it would still be one of the finest of current films. The landscape is of course wonderful—limitless in its distances and its dusts, and smoothed by time into the most suggestive shapes. But the people matter more. I do not expect to forget Tseven and his nomad friends; or the bald-headed lama squatting by his American alarm clock; or the other rogue of a lama who is bribed to lure Tseven into Manchuria; or the pot-bellied giant wrestlers; or the old men with wrinkled foreheads who watch them from the side-lines; or the denizens of inns and the singers of unearthly broken songs who appear for a moment in the incomparable interiors. These are obviously a

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great people, even to one who does not know exactly how to measure them. They have been here forever, they are very tough and wise, and there is a strength in their smiling which seems to say that they are rooted too deeply in the sour earth ever to desire the foreign sweetness of change.

"Son of Mongolia," however, is more than a newsreel. With Tseven Rabdan playing the role of Tseven, and with Ilya Trauberg doing an imaginative piece of directing, it grows into something picaresque if not epic. For Tseven travels into Manchuria on his little white horse; learns through many adventures there that his native republic is surrounded by enemies; and trots home a hero no less than a patriot. Rabdan in this role cuts a fine, merry figure; he is a plump Don Quixote who knows how to fill each landscape he crosses with human meaning, and how to sound each situation to its deepest chuckle. He is one of the best actors I have ever watched, just as this is one of the best films—an Oriental "Western" if you do not mind the contradiction in terms.

If "Son of Mongolia" had not been so good I would have spent more time praising "Song of China" (Little Carnegie) and "The Yellow Cruise" (Fifty-fifth Street Playhouse), both of which convey a great deal of information about the other side of the earth and both of which are heartily recommended. The first is a story dealing with the filial relation in China as it has been affected by the West, and is most interestingly acted by Chinese. The second is a travel picture, following the third Citroen-Haardt expedition from Beirut to Peking—that is to say, over the Himalayas and through some of the most interesting countries in the world.

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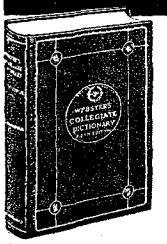

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Letters to the Editors

Joseph Shaplen Versus The Nation

Dear Sirs: I think that the editorial "'Peace' and the C. I. O." in *The Nation* of November 7 is a very fine analysis of the whole problem it concerns.

JOHN L. LEWIS

Washington, November 14

Dear Sirs: The Nation of November 7 carried a leading editorial on the peace moves in the A. F. of L.–C. I. O. controversy, charging me with unreliable reporting and warning readers that my stories in the New York *Times* on this question are not to be trusted. The argument you set up is founded upon distortions, misrepresentations, and downright suppression of fact. The record and documentary evidence available are against you.

While professing to desire peace in the labor movement, you seek to throw discredit upon the genuineness and sincerity of the peace moves and upon labor leaders involved, as part of your other objective of impugning my reportorial integrity and accuracy. According to your version, I first sighted "the dove of peace" at a luncheon attended by persons who do not seem to meet with your approval. You add that later I reported how Max Zaritsky, at the convention of his organization, "pulled the bird of peace out of a hat," as you put it. The fact that the luncheon in question was attended by an audience of representative labor men on both sides of the C. I. O. controversy and by others of influence and importance in the situation, in addition to Messrs. Woll, Cahan, and Zaritsky, is not recorded by *The Nation.* That would be lending weight to something *The Nation* finds it necessary to belittle, just as you find it advantageous for your purpose to ridicule the hatters' proposal.

Strange, was it not, that a little bird, pulled out of a hat, should have occupied the attention of the Committee for Industrial Organization for two whole days, with the entire press giving it front-page publicity? If only the editors of the country had *The Nation's* conception of news values! And was it not also strange that what *The Nation* refers to contemptuously as "rumors gathered in vague 'labor circles' of peace, compromise, and dissensions" should have been confirmed at Pittsburgh as hard, incontrovertible facts, by no means "exclusive to the *Times*"? I cite this not because I like dissension, but as an illustration that stories do not remain exclusive when based on fact.

For the benefit of readers who may desire more information and less bias, it should be stated that the peace idea was not born at the aforementioned luncheon. Serious talk of peace and of the necessity of peace had been in progress for months in the important labor circles where *The Nation's* editors are not known to move. Those truly familiar with the situation expected that peace moves would be launched as the A. F. of L. convention in Tampa drew near. Events confirmed the expectation. No one, of course, could be sure that the peace moves would be successful. No one ever said they would be. Weeks before the hatters made their peace proposal, the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, David Dubinsky's organization, largest C. I. O. affiliate next to the miners, let it be known that it was anxious that peace in the labor movement be restored. At the convention of the New York State Federation of Labor in Syracuse on August 27, Luigi Antonini, first vice-president of the I. L. G. W. U., made an impassioned plea for peace. Speaking as a delegate of his union Mr. Antonini appealed to the federation to help "put out the fire," to use its good offices in behalf of peace. *The Nation* finds it inconvenient to record that fact. It doesn't fit into its special chronology and disturbs its thesis. It spoils its "peace dove" story.

Coupled with your suggestion that an old, highly respected, and progressive labor organization permitted itself to be used as an instrument for a sleight-of-hand performance, you suggest also that the *Times* permitted itself to be used as "a second-hand machine-shop for grinding Old Guard axes." It is quite clear what axes you are grinding. You underestimate and distort the events of October 4 and subsequent dates. You distort the character and immediate aims of the hatters' peace proposal, and you misrepresent the nature and purpose of the action taken upon it by the executive council of the A. F. of L. By juggling citations of some of my stories and Washington dispatches, while omitting others, you achieve conclusions directly at variance with the facts.

It is not true, for example, that the executive council of the A. F. of L. "ignored" the first part of the hatters' proposal, the part relating to the lifting of the suspensions against the C. I. O. unions. Nor is it true that this was the "crucial" part. As the authors of the proposal explained it to those willing to report the situation objectively, and in statements for publication, their hope was that once both sides appointed committees, as provided in the proposal, and entered into negotiations, a formula would be found, given good-will and cooperation on both sides, which would make possible the lifting of the suspensions. The record shows that the actions taken by the executive council and the committee appointed by the council to negotiate with the C. I. O. were clearly in the same direction.

It is likewise untrue that the executive council's committee sought to meet with "individuals" in a move to split the C. I. O. The record shows that the committee aimed at a joint conference with a committee of the C. I. O. unions.

The Nation ignores the fact that both the executive council and its committee, while undertaking no commitments, also made no stipulations—an important step forward in view of the council's previous categorical demand for dissolution of the C. I. O. as a condition preliminary to the lifting of suspensions. The "splitting tactic" charged to the council's committee is not born out by the facts. Nor is there evidence in the record that Mr. Zaritsky replied to any "splitting tactic." He merely reaffirmed his desire for collective peace. The situation as presented by *The Nation* on these and other points is therefore not "clear-cut" but rather a distortion of the real picture—"exclusive" to *The Nation.*

You have no proof whatever that I ever stated that "the C. I. O. was crumbling and begging for peace." This is pure invention on your part.

According to *The Nation* I was persecuting Mr. Lewis for "delaying peace by not accepting terms which would mean the end of the C. I. O. and all it stands

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for." The stories merely reported truthfully the dissatisfaction in C. I. O. ranks here with Mr. Lewis's delay in naming a negotiations committee after he had already accepted the hatters' peace proposal, characterized by *The Nation* itself as giving "whole-hearted defense and support to the C. I. O." Now that Louis Stark has reported from Pittsburgh that Messrs. Zaritsky and Dubinsky were "visibly disappointed" with the refusal to name a committee, I suppose it would be proper to state, in the language of *The Nation,* that "the 'peacemakers' were still irked." That Mr. Lewis had actually indorsed the hatters' proposal was reported in a dispatch from Washington in the *Times* of October 10. *The Nation* suppresses this fact. It confines itself to saying that in a New York story in the *Times* of October 9 I had misrepresented Mr. Lewis's position.

Two other exhibits you offer as introducing "a note of reality" into my allegedly false picture are spurious because you fail to give all the facts. I refer to the two Washington dispatches you cite so gleefully, the first of which was headlined "Labor Peace Move Strikes New Snag," etc., and "Move to Split C. I. O. Begun by A. F. of L.," etc. You fail to make clear that the letter to Mr. Zaritsky figuring in the first dispatch was from the executive council's committee in response to Mr. Lewis's demand for clarification, also reported in the same dispatch. You fail to mention that the letter was intended for transmission to *all* C. I. O. members, and that it was actually transmitted to all C. I. O. members. These facts do not harmonize with the charge of "splitting tactic," which you take pains to emphasize in your effort to discredit people you don't agree with and my reporting of developments. You also conveniently ignore the offer contained in the letter to reconsider the C. I. O. suspensions. You prefer to tell your readers that the A. F. of L. "ignored" this matter. As part of your effort to mislead on this point you ignore also the statement of William Green, president of the A. F. of L., in the *Times* of October 28 (first edition), in which he stated unequivocally that the A. F. of L. had abandoned its demand that "the C. I. O. be dissolved as a condition previous to peace discussions."

"We now make no stipulations precedent to a conference, because the executive council fully appreciates and understands that if a settlement of differences can be reached, both the dissolution of the C. I. O. and the reinstatement of the unions constituting it will be automatically settled," Mr. Green said. "That would follow logically."

The letter of the executive council's committee to Mr. Zaritsky and Mr. Green's statement just quoted did, indeed, introduce "a note of reality" into the situation, but *The Nation* chooses to suppress these facts.

Additional evidence of your unfair and colored reporting is offered in the suppression of an important detail in connection with the Washington story headlined "Move to Split C. I. O. Begun by A. F. of L.," etc. The story was based upon the letter from the executive council's committee to Mr. Zaritsky, the text of which was not available for publication in Washington when the story was filed. The actual text of the letter flatly contradicted the story, which next day, October 17, provoked a denial from the committee. The *Times* carried the denial, in accordance with proper journalistic practice. You ignore it completely in your one-sided picture. You print the accusation and suppress the defense. You also make much of a story in the *Times* of October 25, in which, according to your article, "the campaign against the C. I. O. reached a climax." The story appears to have been based upon information from steel circles. It so happens that I did not write this particular story. There never was any "campaign against the C. I. O." on my part or on the part of the authors of the peace proposal.

The story of October 27, in which I am supposed to have continued to "bait" Mr. Lewis, stood up, as have all the other stories you seek to discredit. Your suggestion that Mr. Lewis had come to New York to meet three prominent members of the C. I. O. without having any intention to speak to any of them about the C. I. O. situation is puerile. There is documentary evidence that he did come here with such intention. As a matter of fact, on his own suggestion, I was to call Mr. Dubinsky that evening to get whatever information there was available for publication after he was to have conferred with Mr. Lewis.

There remains, finally, the fuss you make about the Dubinsky speech of October 4. There is nothing in my report of that speech indicating that Mr. Dubinsky had abandoned the ideological position of the C. I. O. Mr. Lewis's views on Mr. Dubinsky's speech are irrelevant. Nor is the disagreement between Mr. Lewis and Mr. Green as to

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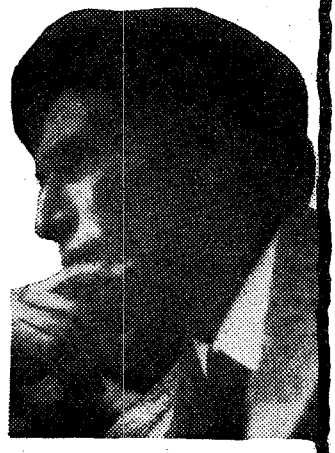

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what Mr. Dubinsky said of any importance. I conveyed to Mr. Green a brief summary of the speech as it affected the possibilities for peace, and other relevant facts of the situation as it was shaping itself at that time. That was natural. He would have been a poor reporter who would have failed to get the Green angle of the story. What does matter is whether Mr. Dubinsky complained about my story. *He did not.* Had his position been misrepresented he would have been entitled to a correction and he would have got it. He expressed satisfaction with the story when I spoke to him on the morning of October 5. Because he speaks with unusual rapidity, making it difficult for a stenographer to follow him, he undertook—so he informed me—to correct the stenographic record and make such alterations as he deemed necessary.

The suggestion that there was no special practical significance in Mr. Dubinsky's speech is contradicted by the reception he received from the audience, the interpretation of other newspapermen present, and the consequences that followed. To cast doubt upon the validity of my report you forget to mention that three days later Mr. Dubinsky actually conferred with Mr. Green in an effort to facilitate peace. But I have already mentioned so many facts you found it convenient to forget that it is not necessary to add more.

The record shows clearly, to paraphrase your conclusion, that readers of *The Nation* must not take your reporting seriously. It is not reliable.

JOSEPH SHAPLEN

New York, November 10

[Mr. Shaplen fails to controvert the contentions of our editorial of November 7. David Dubinsky at the hatters' convention stated that his organization would like to have peace providing the basis of that peace was *the organization along industrial lines of the mass-production industries.* The *Times* report, which was headed "Peace Overtures Made to A. F. of L. by C. I. O. Leaders," contained Mr. Dubinsky's much milder statement that the C. I. O. would dissolve if the A. F. of L. would help organize the steel industry but omitted the underlined stipulation, thereby completely distorting the position of Mr. Dubinsky. Taken in conjunction with the headline, it clearly carried the implication that "C. I. O. leaders" were ready to recede from a position the C. I. O. has consistently held and continues to hold until the moment of going to press. The fact that Mr. Dubinsky did not complain is irrelevant. Neither did he complain about Mr. Lewis's correction which was contained in a dispatch from Washington the next day. On this score one of Mr. Shaplen's own defenders proves our case. In a letter to *The Nation,* which we shall not publish because it has already appeared in the Socialist *New Leader,* Richard Rohman, a labor reporter, who was present when Mr. Dubinsky spoke, testifies, *in defense of Mr. Shaplen,* that he [Mr. Rohman] reported Mr. Dubinsky's speech "in virtually the identical words employed by Mr. Shaplen." Then Mr. Rohman continues: "Mr. Dubinsky *did* say that he was prepared to give up the C. I. O. provided the A. F. of L. agreed to undertake a campaign to organize workers in the mass-production industries on an industrial-union basis"—which is exactly *The Nation's* contention.

The fact that Mr. Lewis and Mr. Green disagreed as to what Mr. Dubinsky said was obviously of the utmost importance since the industrial organization of the mass-production industries is the central issue in the controversy between the A. F. of L. and the C. I. O. We did not criticize Mr. Shaplen for getting the "Green angle" of the story. We criticized him because, from all indications, he gave Mr. Green the impression that Mr. Dubinsky had deserted the position of the C. I. O.

The "peace overture" of the hatters' convention, which was, to speak more accurately, a plea to the executive council that it reverse its position, was carefully quoted in our editorial. After a long introduction giving whole-hearted support to the C. I. O. and rebuking the executive council, the resolution (1) called upon the executive council to permit the organizations affiliated with the C. I. O. to be represented in the next convention; (2) proposed that "pending the rendering of judgment by the convention" the council name a subcommittee to meet with a like subcommittee of the C. I. O. "for the purpose of jointly exploring the possibilities of reconciling the existing differences and finding a formula by which the hopes of all workers for the unity of the labor movement and the organization of the workers in the mass-production industries may be realized." Since the C. I. O. could not be represented in the convention unless the suspensions were lifted, these two recommendations, if they mean anything, mean that the hatters were recommending that the suspensions be lifted and that the question whether or not to suspend be decided at a convention at which delegates from the C. I. O. unions as well as those from the other unions would be present and voting.

For the C. I. O. to have appointed a subcommittee without first having the suspensions lifted would have been to acknowledge the legality of that action, which the C. I. O. has so far refused to do. When, therefore, the suspensions were not lifted, the C. I. O. did not appoint a committee. We rest upon the text of the resolution, not on what its authors are reported by Mr. Shaplen to have thought they meant by it. The fact that Mr. Zaritsky hotly defended the C. I. O. in Tampa and that the C. I. O. interpreted the proposal as we have indicated must also be noted.

We did not state that the "peace idea was born" at the luncheon for Mr. Cahan. It was at that time that peace began its career in the *Times.*

We based our editorial comment on the text of the hatters' resolution. We maintain that "the part relating to the lifting of the suspensions" was crucial. The executive council ignored this section in that it did not lift the suspensions. If Mr. Shaplen prefers the phrase "refused to accept" we have no objection. The end result is the same.

We did not say that Mr. Shaplen "ever stated 'that the C. I. O. was crumbling and begging for peace.' "

Whereas Mr. Shaplen accused us in an earlier paragraph of distorting the character and immediate aims of the hatters' resolution, he later quotes with evident approval our description of the hatters' resolution as giving "whole-hearted defense and support to the C. I. O." Of course Mr. Lewis indorsed it since it restated his own position, but he accepted the two sections together and in order—(1) the lifting of suspensions, and (2) the appointment of a subcommittee. The executive council accepted only the second part. Large headlines reported Mr. Lewis as "joining" the peace move when he said that if the executive council would lift the suspensions the C. I. O. would be willing to negotiate. Is that "joining"?

The fact that the letter was sent to all C. I. O. members supports our opinion that it was a splitting tactic since it offered conferences with individual unions. Naturally the executive council denied that it was a splitting tactic. The executive council also denies that industrial unionism has anything to do with the present controversy.

We missed the first edition of the *Times.* We are glad to see that Mr.

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Green was willing to relent on the suspensions. The Tampa convention was not.

We in no way suggested that "the authors of the peace proposal," if Mr. Shaplen means Dubinsky and Zaritsky, were making a campaign against the C. I. O. We suggested that reactionary A. F. of L. leaders were trying to split the needle trades away from the C. I. O. through bearing down on the value of an A. F. of L. affiliation. That campaign has now become overt.—EDITORS THE NATION.]

Norman Thomas and the C. I. O.

Dear Sirs: Heywood Broun defends his unwarranted statement that Norman Thomas has not dared to indorse the C. I. O. by writing in your columns on November 21 that "if Mr. Thomas is lending support, I think he ought to notify John L. Lewis, the chairman of the committee."

If the C. I. O. leader does not know of Thomas's support, he doesn't read his own official organ, the *United Mine Workers' Journal,* which on September 1, 1936, reported the following: "Backs the C. I. O. Norman Thomas Takes Stand for Industrial Unions." The story begins: "Norman Thomas, Socialist candidate for President, has placed himself behind John L. Lewis and the industrial-union forces ordered suspended by A. F. of L."

Mr. Broun has the inalienable right to be ignorant of the most publicized of facts, but he has no reason to claim that John L. Lewis shares his ignorance.

AARON LEVENSTEIN

New York, November 21

The Sitdowns

Dear Sirs: My two articles on sitdowns —of which the first appears in this issue—are somewhat tentative. I have a strong suspicion that I do not know nearly all about them; and since I intend to have a chapter on the subject in my next book, which will deal with America, I wish to ask *The Nation's* readers who know, or think they know, more than I do to communicate with me. I am particularly eager to get reports on actual sitdowns, or occurrences which may resemble them, in other industries than rubber; and to be corrected on whatever may be wrong with these articles. My address is in care of *The Nation.*

LOUIS ADAMIC

New York, November 25

"The Stones Awake"

Dear Sirs: Permit me to correct the mistakes made by Leigh White in his review of my book, "The Stones Awake," in your issue of October 31.

1. "Black River" was not my first but my second novel.
2. "The Stones Awake" is in no sense an attempt to relate the history of Mexico through the characters in the novel.
3. The lover of the heroine did not go off to join the Zapatista revolution.
4. Except by loose Communist definition, Francisco Madero was not an "aristocrat."
5. The heroine, Esperanza, was not brought into contact with "the decadence of Mexican officialdom and the Gringo influx"—God save us! until she had become literate.
6. Esperanza and her brother did not found a public school but a cooperative school after a public school had been denied to them.
7. Not the bulk or even a small part of the experiences of Esperanza can be found in "Mexican Maze."
8. It is a gross misapprehension of historical fact, as well as doubtful English, to speak of the "venal succession of Huerta, Carranza, Calles, Gil, Rubio, up to the pseudo-socialism under Cárdenas."
9. Mexico had no Presidents named "Gil" or "Rubio." White probably refers to "Portes" and "Ortiz."
10. Only three minor incidents of my own life, which apparently Mr. White knows better than I know *his,* were utilized in "The Stones Awake," though he categorically states that "scarcely an exploitable incident" of my life was overlooked.
11. Mexico has had no "bourgeois revolt" in this century, except possibly in the fantasy of American Communists.
12. It is technically incorrect to speak of the "Six-Year Plan of President Cárdenas." It is the "Calles Six-Year Plan."

CARLETON BEALS

Branford, Conn., November 5

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CONTRIBUTORS

LOUIS ADAMIC contributed to our issue of May 6 an article on Harry Bridges and the San Francisco waterfront which provides excellent background for the present deadlock there. He has just returned from a trip to Akron, Toledo, and other mass-production centers. His account of the sitdown, which was invented in Akron, is particularly interesting in view of parallel developments in other countries.

ALVIN JOHNSON, since his boyhood on a Nebraska farm and through many years as professor of economics at various universities, has been a student of agricultural problems. He is now director of the New School for Social Research and president of the American Economic Association.

EDA LOU WALTON is a poet and critic whose next book will be a study of modern American poetry in relation to social problems.

PAUL SWEEZY is instructor in economics at Harvard University and a writer on economic theory for English and American periodicals.

HENRY DAVID, author of "The Haymarket Affair," and coauthor with Harry Elmer Barnes of "A History of Western Civilization," is an instructor in history at the College of the City of New York. He is now writing a book on the origin of women's rights.

CYRIL KAY-SCOTT, formerly dean of the School of Art at the University of Denver and curator of the Denver Art Museum, is now one of the directors of the Federal Art Project in New York.

ARTHUR LIVINGSTON, translator of Pareto and of the plays of Pirandello, is associate professor of Romance languages at Columbia University.

B. E. BETTINGER, at one time on the editorial staff of the *New Freeman,* is now with the *New Republic.*

MARIANNE MOORE was one of the editors of the *Dial* when that monthly was the organ for many of the writers represented in the anthologies under review. She is one of the most distinguished of contemporary American poets, and her "Selected Poems" have recently been published with a preface by T. S. Eliot.

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